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TODDIE

GILBERT WATSON

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TODDIE

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THE ROMANCE OF A WOMAN HATER

BY

GILBERT WATSON
AUTHOR OF "FORBIDDEN GROUND," ETC., ETC.

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TODDIE

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CHAPTER I

HAVE you ever stood in the rain and the darkness, fearfully anticipating a cook, when every inch of your person yearned for a familiar corner in a hopelessly distant bar?

If you have then you can sympathize with Toddie.

As Toddie stood there waiting for his knock to be answered and more than half inclined to run away, the little caddie recalled his master's words: "Go round to the kitchen, Toddie, dry yourself at the fire, and Devina will give you tea."

The Major had meant kindly no doubt, but he had been prompted thereto by his companion. Why had she joined them? It was all the fault of the mist. Had she not lost her way they would still have been practising approach shots untroubled by women. And now his master had been beguiled in at the front door, and he, Toddie, had been peremptorily ordered to the back, lured by the same insidious bait — warmth and tea.

A not unwelcome proposal to wet and thirsty men, it might be supposed; but, whatever the master's feelings upon the subject, the caddie at all events viewed it with dark suspicion — from which the reader may infer that Toddie was that unnatural and misguided creature, a woman hater.

He knocked again, but barely had his wet and benumbed knuckles come into contact with the door than the latter opened unexpectedly. A fierce light leaped out, a disconcerting brightness that appeared to take an inhuman pleasure in drawing attention to his battered cap, his grimy muffler, his out-at-elbows jacket, his frayed and sodden trousers, and his wet and anxious face.

Within, but peering outwards through the narnow slit, was a female in black, speechless, forbidding. Toddie could see her cap. His courage fled.

Wetting his lips with his tongue, he stared helplessly at the apparition. His brain, working unconsciously along old and professional grooves, searched for anything likely to offer assistance.

"Be up," suggested itself, but was instantly and indignantly repudiated. Be up, indeed; he was too near her as it was!

"Come in," she said.

He hesitated.

"Come in," she repeated. As she spoke, she opened the door slowly and grudgingly.

Once inside, his eyes blinked weakly at the cheery fire, at the spotless table, at the dresser with its rows of winking plates, and at the face of Devina. The last mentioned swept all else from his mind. To use his own words — whispered later in husky confidence to Bob —" It just gripped ye. Man, Bob, it just put the fear o' death on ye."

Yet it was by no means an unpleasant countenance, for the dark eyes were more indicative of sadness than austerity, and the mouth, if stern, had been known to soften on occasions to a very tender smile.

For the moment, however, its expression was far from reassuring; and, truth to tell, had Toddie been a recently imported cannibal, and had Devina been requested to give him tea, she could not have undertaken the task with more unfeigned reluctance.

" What a mess! " she ejaculated with high disapprobation, and not without reason, for a pool of considerable dimensions was rapidly transforming Toddie into an island.

" I canna help it," said the culprit sulkily.

" Here — stand still, till I get a cloth to ye."

She was back in a moment. Any one with half an eye could see that she was a born worker. In a twinkling Toddie stood upon dry ground.

" Take off yer boots," was her next remark.

Toddie frowned, opened his mouth to refuse, then

mechanically, as one under an evil spell, began to fumble at the knots.

Ruthlessly exposed, the holes in his socks protested against the indignity.

Grimly Devina surveyed her guest. Of unusual height, she looked down upon him from an altitude that overawed him. Her handsome face still expressed disapproval.

"Give me yer coat," she commanded.

"Bob," said Toddie later, with awful solemnity, "Bob, ye won't believe me, an' I 'm not blamin' ye, but it 's God's truth the woman took the verra coat off ma back; an' I was in sair fear she would ask for ma breeks too."

Not till the dripping garment had been hung up to dry, and a semi-clad and bewildered Toddie had been planted close to the fire, did the enemy turn her attention to the rites of hospitality. The expeditious way that tea made its appearance was not the least among the wonders of the night.

"Two lumps?" questioned Devina severely.

"Three," muttered Toddie.

He took the cup from her and nervously stirred the contents with the handle of the butter-knife, till, encountering her eye, he hastily substituted a spoon.

The warmth of tea, combined with the heat of the fire, thawed the cold out of his joints. Yet physical

well-being failed to counteract mental anxiety. He must be on his guard, he told himself, for you never could tell what a woman would be at next. "Black," he criticized, stealing furtive glances at his hostess. "How comes it she 's wearin' black on a week-day? Maybe somebody 's dead?" Her neatness and cleanness made him vaguely uncomfortable. And as for the genteel way she munched her toast! "Weel, there was nae word for it." Her figure, too, made him ill at ease. Not it alone, but the masses of dark hair coiled behind her shapely head, the turn of her neck when she faced the fire, even the way she poured out tea — all were alarmingly feminine.

"What 's your name?" she asked abruptly.

At the answer she actually laughed. It was wonderful how a laugh became her.

"Toddie?" she repeated. "That 's a drink!"

"Ye may say that, Devina," he guffawed, under the influence of this stimulating idea.

Swiftly her face darkened.

"Who gave you permeesion to call me Devina?" she demanded. Without waiting for an answer, she swept on:

"Ma name 's Miss Greig, as I would have ye know; and I allow no man to miscall me."

The awkward silence that ensued was broken only by the fire. It was marvelous how it managed to retain its heat.

Still suffering from extreme nervousness Toddie had thoughts of spitting, but refrained. Devina likewise was far from being herself; for, producing a work-basket with an assumption of indifference, she began to inspect an unfinished garment, then, suddenly conscious of the presence of a man, banished it in confusion.

For a while they both sat quite still and if the truth were known, each longed for the other to be gone. Gradually Toddie's thoughts wandered to the subject that preoccupied his mind — his master, now presumably conducting a similar campaign in the drawing-room. Were they not allies, single men, confronting the same peril? Indeed had it not been for this conviction, and the belief that by sharing his master's danger he was to some extent supporting him, Toddie would have been by no means so easily beguiled into a kitchen.

Regarding his employer's ultimate safety he felt no anxiety. Even the Major's audible pleasure when meeting the lady in the mist, his altered voice, his words, betraying a refinement of language unknown to golf, his alacrity in accompanying her had failed to alarm him, for he attributed all to the artificial polish of the upper classes.

Did he not know the Major? Had not his master eluded the toils of matrimony for forty years? Were not his days passed at golf and his evenings at the

club? This visit was plainly an accident. No. There was no cause for anxiety.

His attention turned to his companion. She was leaning forward, her chin sunk to the palm of her hand, her eyes fixed on the fire. An expression of somber melancholy darkened her face.

"Greig?" muttered Toddie thoughtfully. "I mind the name. You 'll no' be the daughter of Geordie Greig, him we called Skipper, drowned in the harbor a matter o' five year back?"

"Aye."

"I 'm sorry," he murmured, for her tone made him feel that he had stumbled unwarrantably upon a private and enduring grief.

"You 'll be a caddie?" she said.

"Just that."

"A hard life," she mused, and for the moment her voice held unaccountable sympathy.

"Oh, betwixt an' between," said Toddie, instinctively suspicious of all female compassion.

"It 's no life for an able-bodied man," she resumed, with a fresh access of gruffness. "I 'd rather break stones upon the road. Ye look strong, an' ye 're not that old; can ye no' find onythin' better to do than runnin' after a silly ball?"

Toddie rubbed his hands up and down his trouser-legs. "It 's meat and drink to me," he growled in self-defense.

"More drink than meat, I 'll be bound."

A ghost of a twinkle crept into Toddie's eyes, but he banished it in an access of caution.

"You 'll be a cook?" he suggested, then smiled, for he considered this adroit change of subject "awful clever."

"I was, but now I 'm the maid."

Toddie pursed his lips. His knowledge of maids was limited to occasional glimpses of the species seen between the bars of area railings. They had always filled him with lively apprehension.

"Where — where are the ithers?" he questioned, peering round him nervously.

"Ye 'll not find them there. That 's the larder. Cook 's gone to see her mither; and Jessie 's away gallivantin'."

"And you sit here alone?"

"Not as a rule. I 'm generally up the stair."

He stole a glance at her, and finding her gazing into the fire, was emboldened to inspect her with a fearful and furtive curiosity.

"What 's the difference between a maid and a cook?" he blurted suddenly.

"Are you for askin' riddles?" she inquired scathingly.

"No, no; I thought —"

"Weel, can ye no' speak? What did you think?"

"I thought all women were maids till — till they married."

She cast a look of unutterable contempt at his innocent and serious countenance, then turned away.

"Did ye never hear tell o' a lady's maid?" she asked abruptly.

Toddie pondered, then brightened.

"I 've heard o' an auld maid," he said hopefully.

What induced the woman to ejaculate "Impidence!" Toddie could never understand. The incident, though trivial, added to his nervousness.

"What d' ye come here for, wastin' my time?" she demanded, after a lengthy pause. No intentional rudeness lurked in the interrogation. Devina spoke in all simplicity, as one stating a fact.

"I was told to come," he answered with resignation.

"Who told ye?"

"The Major — and her."

"Miss Charity?"

"Aye."

Devina's face became thoughtful.

"She told me, too. I wonder at her," she said slowly.

"And I wonder at him," pronounced Toddie with decision.

Then little by little they drifted into desultory conversation — prompted thereto by a melancholy ac-

ceptation of the inevitable rather than by motives of sociability.

"Ah, but he 's a fine schollard," cried Toddie, launching complacently upon a topic dear to his heart. "It 's just amazin' how much he knows. Book learnin' 's a queer thing." Here he passed a thoughtful hand over his untidy hair. "I sometimes think it depends on the size o' a man's head. A grand player, too; we won the Jubilee Vase thegither, so we did. An' kind — see here —" he reached out for his boots, "these were his once — London made, no less. A wee thing worn in the soles — but ah! there 's a bonnie pair of uppers for ye!"

He broke off; for, despite his genuine and wholehearted enthusiasm, he was disconcerted by this grim and silent woman who appeared to look through and through him with her somber, observant eyes. She plainly took no interest in boots. She did not even seem to see them! This amazing want of appreciation, casting as it did an aspersion upon the former property of his master, roused Toddie into mild resentment. With a desire to impress her at all costs, he continued:

"Him an' me has walked the links thegither five year come Martinmas, wet or fine, on or off, aye, ever since he was minded to give heathen countries the go-by and live respectable in his native land. I

tell ye, he 's rich." He leaned over the table towards her, his eyes big with importance. "Oh, I 've seen his room, two rooms, no less. Ye dinna seem partial to boots, but his neckties! Weel, I wish ye could see them; ye just couldna help being staggered."

"I 'm not carin'."

Toddie flushed. The deep, contemptuous voice broke rudely upon his pæan of praise. It continued:

"What do I care for yer Major? What 's he come here for; answer me that, you that brought him?"

"Me! *Me* that brought him!"

"Aye, you. Did he not come here with you the day? An' the ither days, if ye didna bring him ye knew fine where he was."

"Ither days!" he ejaculated in sudden consternation. "*Here!* I didna know."

"Weel, ye should ha' known, and that 's as bad. D' ye hear?" Her voice rang loud and hard. "I mistrust it."

He could only stare at her, speechless.

"An' as for yer flatterin' tongue, I dinna believe a word ye 're sayin'. You men are all alike. *I* know! Ye tell lies about each other as easy as winkin'. *Kind*, is he! Let him keep his kindness out of our drawing-room. And more — ye think be-

cause I say little I canna see! Ye 're wrong. I see fine. Major, say you! What 's he anyway compared to my Miss Charity? *Him!*" She snapped her fingers in contempt. "Not fit to clean her boots. I tell ye once for all there 's not a finer dressed leddy in the town, no, nor a better, nor a bonnier, nor a kinder in all Scotland."

"I 'm not denyin' it!"

She gave vent to a short and scornful laugh.

"Denyin' it! I should think not indeed! Drinking her good two-shilling tea and denyin' it! Ma word! I 'd have ye out of her kitchen in a minute."

Before Toddie could recover, a peculiar and nasal sound made itself heard. His face brightened.

"What 's that?" said Devina suspiciously. "Was that you?"

"Na. That 's Bob."

"Who?"

"Just Bob. He 's come for me. I 'll have to go. Ye see Bob will nose me oot o' ony house in the town. There 's not anither dog in St. Andrews to beat him at smells. Here, keep quiet. I 'm comin'."

When his boots were on he looked at her doubtfully. She returned his look with a steady stare, not bold, but full of a gloomy and brooding antagonism. He faced her for a moment, breathed hard like a man who would fain speak but is at a loss for words,

then bidding her good night, marched hastily to the door.

As she remained seated by the fire she heard frantic yelps of delight mingling with: "Doon, Bob, ye auld deevil! That 's no way to behave. Keep doon, ye wee rascal! Man, but ye 're wet! Come on."

Then the door closed and she was left alone.

CHAPTER II

A DAY of rain — steady, hopeless rain — falling from a sky that domed land and sea like a vast leaden extinguisher. A dun yellow light, like the dawn of some unearthly day, replaced the darkness of night with a wan and sinister gloom through which all things — the club-house, the two big hotels, the rows of gray houses, the deserted links and the sea, heaving under a northerly swell, showed as so many misty phantoms. Water everywhere. It dripped from the roofs, it gushed down the gutters, it lay in pools in every depression of the links, it saturated the heavy gravel opposite the club-house and squelched under the heavy boots of the hall-porter as he forsook the shelter of the porch in order to cast a gloomy eye at the weather.

The big clock that decorated the wall of the club-house pointed to eight, yet despite the matutinal hour and the hopeless character of the day, several men might have been seen within the caddie shelter. It was a bare and cheerless building. The boards that composed the floor were worn and dirty.

A single bench ran round the interior, the wood-

work of which was polished by continual friction. An iron heat radiator stood at one end, but as it had not been lighted, its ugliness but emphasized the cheerless character of the scene. Three windows and a door, usually open, gave light to those within. Two of the former looked out on to the restricted area where the caddies were wont to march to and fro in fair weather — the third commanded the club-house. A small inner opening large enough for a man's head and shoulders, communicated with the caddie-master's box.

Upon the occasion in question, the air within this building was heavy with moisture, chill with wintry cold, acrid with the faint odor of decaying seaweed, and unpleasantly suggestive of musty and saturated clothing.

Five men waited here for the employers who never came — waited with what patience and hopefulness they could summon to their aid. One, well stricken with years, was seated on the bench. The water dripped from his threadbare coat; it glistened on his thin and wrinkled face, but he appeared unconscious of it. With knees close together, back bent nearly double, head sunk forward on his chest, and blue hands limp and pendant by his side he stared outwards at the driving rain with an air of apathetic vacuity. Another, known as "daft Willy" stood near the door, a vacant smile on his long, expression-

less face. The other three, stout fellows enough, strolled up and down, shuffling their feet upon the sodden boards, pausing occasionally to gaze out of the streaming window-panes, to expectorate, and to mutter curses at the weather.

"It 's on for the day," growled Murdock — a thick-set man with a bull-neck. "And a mighty poor chance of a round for us."

"Some plays in the rain," quavered the old man on the bench in a voice that belied the apparent hopefulness of the remark.

"Very few, Tam," said a bearded giant, known as big McPhee, filling a clay pipe. "I wish I 'd stopped in ma bed. Dang these matches; a body 's boots are that wet they winna strike at all."

"There 's Mr. Macdonald," observed Murdoch.

"Where?" questioned Hunter. "Aye, so it is. Ah, he 'll no' be playin' the day; see to his mackintosh, it 's sittin' by the club fire he 'll be after."

"A fire 's a fine thing," said Tam wistfully, but no one paid him attention. For some time there was a mournful silence. McPhee, who had at last managed to light his pipe, puffed energetically. The reek of the coarse tobacco permeated the damp chilly air, floated through the shelter and found its way through the open door. The drip of the rain kept up a monotonous accompaniment to the faint and far-off moaning of the sea. The old man, his eyes

closed, relapsed into a state of somnolent indifference. The half-witted lad continued to smile vacantly at his hands. In his open mouth with its weak pendulous lips the few discolored teeth stood out like fragments.

"Here's Toddie," cried Murdoch suddenly. He was staring through the streaming window-pane, and spoke in the voice of one who anticipates amusement.

"Aye, so it is," corroborated McPhee, looking over his companion's shoulder. "What the deevil brings him out on a day like this? That Major o' his is terrible afeared o' water. Says he to Colonel Fife, the ither day, 'I change ma shirt every time I sweat.'"

The laughter with which this statement was received was interrupted by the entrance of Toddie.

"Weel, lads, glad to see ye sae merry," he said, beaming upon the company. Under his influence they all brightened up, and even Tam overcame his predisposition to exist entirely in the past.

"Ye're no' for playin' the day, are ye?" questioned Murdoch.

"Weel," said Toddie, ringing the moisture from his cap, "I came doon to see, but they tell me the Major's no' in the club yet. Ah, he's wise. What a rain! There will be a lot o' casual water after this, I'm thinkin'."

"What 's this I hear aboot ye, Toddie?" said McPhee with a wink to the others.

"Eh?"

"They tell me ye took yer tea wi' a woman the ither night."

Toddie's cheerful face darkened. His companions did not share his despondency, for a smile appeared on every face. Even Tam's bleared eyes twinkled, and as for Daft Willy, his large mouth expanded so far that it appeared doubtful if it would ever again resume its normal proportions.

"It 's true, then?" chuckled Murdoch.

"Aye," said Toddie reluctantly. "It 's a fact; though there 's naethin' to grin at. Oh, it wasna ma idea. What was I to dae when I was telt to go in? Me that cold and wet, ye could ha' squeezed me like a sponge."

"She'll be the Fords' cook?" questioned Murdoch, smiling.

"Na, she 's the maid. Did ye never hear tell o' a leddy's maid, Murdoch? I 'm surprised at ye. Oh, they 're common in big houses; they just wash up after the leddy. Man, she was terrible genteel, and maist extr'ornar clean — aye, fair lifted oot o' her station."

"Did ye kiss her?" questioned Hunter with interest.

If Toddie had been asked whether he had

murdered her, he could not have looked more horrified.

"Aye," went on Hunter, wagging his head, "I hear there's a bonnie lassie there. The butcher's man telt me. Will that be her, think ye?"

"I heard aboot the lassie too," corroborated Murdoch. "It was Jock Aitken told me. He said after he'd swept the chimneys he aye washed his face at the Fords'— it was weel worth the trouble."

"Some likes ye to kiss them quick," mused McPhee in tones of tender reminiscence, "and ithers prefers ye to do it wi' — wi' premeditations."

"That's a powerful word," ejaculated Murdoch. "Where did you come by that, McPhee?"

"I got it frae a professor. He said it was the way he played golf, so I kent it meant somethin' awful slow."

"I believe ye," agreed Hunter.

"There was a cook I once kep' company with," smiled McPhee. "The woman would ha' deceived ony man — withoot he was weel acquaint wi' the queer contradictious ways o' her sex. So, if Toddie here didna take advantage o' the leddy's kindness in givin' him a chance, he's mair o' a fool than he looks."

Toddie's face as he listened to these remarks was a study. It expressed the utmost incredulity and disapproval. Twice he was on the point of interrupt-

ing, and no sooner had McPhee made an end of speaking than he burst forth.

"Here!" he blurted. "That 's no way to talk! Have ye no sense o' decency, o'— o' respect? Takin' away an honest woman's character; aye, behind her back, and you a man. Ye ken her weel enough. She 's Skipper's daughter. Ma word, I 'd like fine to see you take any liberties wi' her! She 'd just start to sweep the floor wi' ye; aye, and I believe she could dae it too, she 's that big."

"Hello! Hello!" ejaculated Hunter. "What 's come over ye? I thought ye disliked women."

"I canna bear them," muttered Toddie, in confusion.

McPhee laughed good-naturedly.

"Weel," he said, spitting on the floor. "Ye 've a verra queer way o' showin' it. Onybody would think ye loved them all. Man, ye 've a lot to learn! I was like you, Toddie, when I was a laddie — somethin' peetyful. Respec' indeed! Ye make me laugh. Respec' yer grannie! Aye, aye, respec' is a braw word, but love 's a better. Just you mind that when ye come to be walkin' oot."

Toddie's indignant repudiation of any desire or intention to walk out, or walk in, or walk anywhere in company with one of the opposite sex, was not received with the gravity it merited. His auditors, with the exception of old Tam and Daft Willy,

judged it an excellent and fitting opportunity for banter. Their jests, if somewhat broad and heavy, were at all events free from ill-nature, and served to beguile the tedium of the bitter winter's day.

"What makes ye sae hard on the women-folk, Toddie?" inquired Murdoch curiously.

"D' ye no' ken?" broke in Tam, speaking eagerly. "Toddie had a mither."

"So have I," exclaimed Daft Willy with a pleased smile.

"We 'll no' speak aboot her, if ye please," said Toddie to Tam.

The old man quailed before the unusual severity in the eyes of his friend. Murmuring in incoherent apology, he retired into the grimy recesses of his green coat.

"Some mithers are no' precisely suited for the job," mused McPhee.

"Havers!" growled Hunter with some heat. "That kind 's no' common." He paused, ruminating; then with laborious reminiscence: "When I think o' mine it puts me in mind o' me bein' a laddie at the schule, and her — and her coaxin' me to say ma bit prayers."

McPhee and Murdoch, unfeignedly amazed, gazed at the besotted face of the speaker.

"Damn rot!" muttered Hunter apologetically, and avoiding their eyes.

"Aye, aye. Oh, aye. M-m, M-m," commented McPhee.

Daft Willy looked from one to the other. His eyes betrayed an eagerness and intelligence which they had before lacked. Several times he moistened his pendulous lips with his tongue, then remarked with complacency:

"Ma mither 's a good woman."

There was an awkward silence, then Murdoch tittered and was secretly kicked by Toddie, for the lady in question was notorious for her lack of virtue.

Accustomed to be the butt of the more unfeeling among his associates, this considerate silence encouraged the half-witted lad. His smile — vacant and meaningless on other occasions, a mere nervous contraction of the facial muscles — became unexpectedly luminous and even tender, the sign of a devotion so deep-rooted as to be the soil from which sprung the only purifying influence in his down-trodden life.

"Aye," he said softly. "She hasna her like in all St. Andrews. I whiles peety ither chaps."

Still smiling, he relapsed into silence. In the pause that ensued the patter of the rain on the roof was depressingly audible.

"When a laddie hasna had a kind hame," quavered Tam all at once, "it isna to be wondered at if he gets like Toddie here; and forby was he no' brought

up by Jock Aitken — him that died o' jaundice — and ye all ken what sort o' a wife he had."

"Tam," said Toddie sternly.

"Aye, Toddie?"

"Did I give ye leave to talk o' ma private affairs?"

"No, Toddie."

"Weel, shut yer mouth."

Tam obeyed.

McPhee yawned loudly, then muttered an oath.

"Anither day wasted, just look at it! It 's no' like a day at all. Nae wonder they 've got the gas lighted in the club. No use waitin'. I 'm off. The sight o' all this water makes a man thirsty. Are ye comin', lads?"

Hunter and Murdoch accepted his invitation; and the three men squelched away over the saturated gravel. Daft Willy slunk off by himself. Only Tam and Toddie were left.

CHAPTER III

"WHAT are ye after doin'?" questioned Tam. His tone betrayed the fact that he recognized Toddie for a born leader, and would cheerfully conform to anything he might suggest.

"I thought I might ha' got a sight o' him," murmured Toddie, who was standing at the window.

"Yer Major?" said Tam indifferently.

"Aye."

"You 're awful fond o' him?

"Aye."

Tam coughed. The hoarse, rasping sounds filled the dark and dreary shelter. The spasm shook the bent figure as though with rough hands.

"It beats me," he gasped.

"What beats ye?" questioned Toddie, turning.

"How ony sensible caddie can care for a club member."

Toddie, planted firmly on his sturdy legs, surveyed the huddled and bent figure before him with compassionate superiority.

"D' ye no' feel whiles that ye just have to care for something?" he asked.

"No," replied Tam after lengthy thought. "No."

"Weel, I does. I tell ye, Tam, I couldna gang through the day withoot it. It just warms me."

Tam looked up with interest.

"*Warms* ye, Toddie? If I thought that I—"

"Hoots, man, I was speakin' feeguratively. That's like a parable, ye ken. Oh, I grant ye it's no' given to onybody to speak like that. Ye just say the wan thing and mean the ither. It's a gift."

"Aw!" ejaculated his auditor.

"Aye," pursued Toddie, serious, but conscious of being delicately flattered. "It warms me to care. I canna help it. If ye've got that feelin' in yer heart it just bubbles oot. It's a grand thing I've got the Major and Bob. Ma word!" his voice rose with sudden and unwonted vehemence, "if I hadna found them, who kens but I might start carin' for some daft-like thing — for yerself, maybe?"

"Would ye, though?" cried Tam with gratitude.

"I didna say I would. I said I might. But ye never can tell the way it takes ye. There's days I'm awful near tempted to care for the sea and the sunshine, but, hoots, that's weakness, Tam. When that silly feelin' comes over me I just thinks o' the game and looks hard at the Major."

"Aye, aye," murmured his companion, essaying to warm his benumbed and damp fingers by feebly

rubbing them together, then with a sigh: "I wish I was mair like you, Toddie. I 've not cared for ony-body this lang while back."

"For naebody, Tam?"

The old man looked up at him with dull eyes, then slowly shook his head. "Na. No' that way. I care for you, Toddie — but — it doesna make me ony warmer."

"It 's no' to be looked for, Tam. Na, na, that would be expectin' too much o' nature." Then, with a kindly but critical glance at his friend's shivering anatomy: "It would take a terrible lot o' carin' to warm you."

Tam pondered over the situation. His thin, haggard face, on which the white bristles stood out like frosted stubble above a dirty soil, betrayed the difficulty its owner experienced in analyzing his feelings.

"Ye may be right," he quavered reluctantly. "There 's no' denyin' when ye 're no' there I never thinks aboot ye. I thinks aboot maself."

"That 's what keeps ye cold, Tam."

"Is that a fact? But —" and Tam gazed anxiously up into the face of his friend — "Ye 're not speakin' in parables again, are ye?"

Toddie smiled.

"I believe I was! Ma word! That 's the best of a habit, Tam. It bides with ye. It 's not surprisin'

ye find me puzzlin'— whiles I 'm bothered to find ma meanin' maself."

"It 's a bad habit," pronounced Tam, speaking with unusual conviction.

Toddie caressed his chin. "Weel, I wouldna go sae far as to say that. I tell ye there 's mony a thing the Major says I canna put a meanin' to at all. But, hoots, that doesna show the meanin' is no' there. Na, na, I 've obsairved, Tam, the cleverer ye are the mair ye hide yer meanin'. No' that ye 're ashamed o' it, but just to give folk the pleasure o' findin' it oot. A meanin' is like a lost ball, Tam. Ye canna see it, but it 's there. Aye, and some folks canna find it, while ithers just walks straight to the place. Ye take me?"

Tam opened his mouth in admiration.

"Losh! What a man ye are, Toddie! What a way ye have o' muddlin' things! Ah!"— he shook a mournful head —"I fear ye 're clever."

"Ye think sae, Tam?"

"I do. Ither caddies can talk and I just understand every word they 're sayin'. But you — ye take a thing — an easy thing, mind ye — and twiddle it aboot, and call it a golf ball, and say it 's lost, and, by Jove, it is!"

Toddie smiled complacently.

"I like fine to hear ye haverin'," continued Tam, nodding. "It does naebody ony harm. Aye, and

it takes a body's thoughts off hisself. It 's a grand thing to forget. It 's like bein' asleep, and maybe like bein' dead. But the worst o' it is, when ye stop, a body kind o' wakes up and minds the links and the rheumatics and the cold — aye, that 's the worst o' it, a body 's just dragged aboot by hisself."

There was a note of deep and unconscious pathos in the statement. Nor was it rendered less poignant by attendant circumstances — the gloom of the winter's day — the patter of the rain — the moaning of the sea, and the pallid face and shrunken figure of the poor old derelict seen dimly in the obscurity.

CHAPTER IV

DAVID McCLURE, then alias Toddie, was one of a type of caddie fast becoming extinct even on the classic links of St. Andrews. Another and a younger race are superseding them, a race less wedded to their employer's interests, and less mindful, it may be added, of the true and sporting spirit of the game.

As a caddie, Toddie had been from the first an unqualified success — even as a player he had acquitted himself by no means despicably. It was not for nothing that his eye for flying, or even for stationary balls was unerring, and that his memory for lines was little short of miraculous. This proficiency stood him in good stead. Many a time when on some bitter winter's day his companions were beating their blue and unemployed hands against their sides, or tramping to and fro to keep up their circulation, casting despairing glances the while at the almost deserted club-house, Toddie — as blue and unemployed as his neighbors — would hear the little window that gave light to the caddie-master's box open abruptly.

The head of that individual would pop into sight with disconcerting suddenness, like a royal and ancient jack-in-the-box released from inaction by the sum of eighteenpence — his eyes ranging over his subordinates with the controlling and fateful glance of a generalissimo surveying his forces. There would ensue a moment of anxious suspense. A hush would fall upon the little assembly. Men who had been walking would become motionless — men who had been talking would become dumb. Fifteen pairs of eyes would rivet themselves, pleadingly, sullenly, or resentfully — according to the characters of their respective owners — upon the head framed by the tiny window, and thirty ears would listen and long for the sound of their owners' names.

"McClure," would bellow the caddie-master, and snap would go the closing window. A babel of voices would suddenly arise.

"You again, Toddie," McPhee or Hunter would exclaim with an oath.

"It 's Colonel Hardy; he aye asks for you, Toddie," Tam would sigh, actuated as much — it is a pleasure to record — by melancholy pride in his comrade's popularity as by any sting of personal disappointment; and away Toddie would stump, golf bag under his arm, followed by many an envious glance.

A lonely man, Toddie occupied one small room at

No. 7 Logie's Lane. This he referred to as "Hame," and viewed it, dark and cheerless though it was, with not a little proprietary complacency. Its position in the very center of the town was a source of much pride to him. He considered it genteel, almost aristocratic. The immediate vicinity of the town church cast upon his humble dwelling a shadow of undeniable respectability. When he visited other and less favored mortals — Tam, for instance, who lived in a rickety tenement hard by the harbor — his breast swelled with complacency, which, however, he was careful to conceal when sufficiently sober to master his emotions. Nor were reasons wanting for such satisfaction. Tam's home had its staircase all upon the outside — now you could inspect the exterior of Logie's Lane for a week and discover nothing but that you were wasting your time. Then, too, Tam's plebeian dwelling suffered from the effects of a perennial washing-day. Call when you pleased, your eyes were sure to be scandalized by the sight of the most private of garments shamelessly publishing to the world the sex and secrets of their wearers, contorting their limbs like so many tight-rope dancers, doubling spasmodically upon themselves as though overcome with the fantastic humor of the situation, and, in a word, behaving without the least respect for the proprieties. This, on the face of it, smacked of the slums. It was a matter of self-con-

gratulation to Toddie that no one apparently washed in Logie's Lane.

There existed some souls of the baser sort who, actuated doubtless by envy, accused Toddie of thrusting himself among his betters, aye, of actually living next door to a greengrocer. But it is to be noted that these detractors were the very people who with a smirk of ill-concealed importance would, when in company, refer to "Oor freend in Logie's Lane."

Toddie's mistrust of women was an instinct of long and steady growth. It began with his earliest recollections of his mother. Upon no consideration would he, it is true, permit any remark derogatory to her to be uttered in his hearing, and indeed owed one black eye which had rendered him disreputable for a week to his ardent championship of her imaginative virtues — but "the evil that men do lives after them," and Jessie McClure was branded by all who remembered her with the epithets of shrew and drunkard. When she died, and Toddie was freed forever from her alternate fits of violence and neglect, what wonder that he transferred his apprehension and dislike to the entire sex. It was remarked by the women of the neighborhood that for long after he had been left an orphan you could not speak to him without seeing his little elbow raised in instinctive defense — a pitiable sign that told its own tale.

Accustomed from infancy to look upon the dark

side of family life, Toddie would, as a child, listen to the drunken quarrels of married folk which took place as sure as the Saturday night came round, and so listening drew therefrom his own immature conclusions.

"Marriage will be a sair misfortune," he had once confided to a playmate in the interval of top-spinning. "I canna think how the Lorrd permits it." And in his fervent prayers — for like many another Scottish lad he had passed through a phase of acute religion — he had been wont to wrestle with his Maker, beseeching Him to hasten the blessed time, when, according to his promise, there would be neither marriage nor giving in marriage.

And yet, though shunning female society, Toddie occasionally mustered up courage to speak to old women and little girls. The former, as they sat in their doorways baiting hooks, or were encountered hobbling painfully over the cobble stones, awoke some instinct of pity, and even of tenderness. They had so few pleasures. He forgot their sex in sorrow for their infirmities. Age, by purging them of all attractiveness, had robbed them of all danger. There was one in especial with whom he occasionally enjoyed a chat. Something peculiarly reassuring emanated from her presence — she was so like a man. He would meet her sometimes far out among the rocks, at low tide, gathering shell-fish. When ac-

costed, she would straighten herself with difficulty, and brushing aside a wisp of long white hair that invariably impeded her vision, would look at him with rheumy, lack-luster eyes in which, however, there might be discovered a faint light of sociability.

"What a sight o' cockles!" he had once said to her, pointing to her distended apron. "Ye 'll never eat these all yerself, will ye?"

"Na," she had answered, looking at the shell-fish. "There 's a man in Glasgow takes them aff me," she paused, then: "They 're awful good for worrms," she added thoughtfully.

"Worrms?"

"Aye, better nor onything ye 'll get oot o' a chemist's shop —" she paused again, eyed him with a dawning interest, then inquired, "Have ye ony bairns?"

With a muttered negative he had hastily resumed his walk. It was fully a month before he had ventured to speak to her again.

She seemed to him a natural part of the scenery, like the brown and barren sand, did this little old woman, and he thought about neither till they were immediately under his eyes. One Sabbath afternoon Toddie was gazing at the sea, half mesmerized by its lights and movement, when he heard a feminine voice raised unexpectedly behind him.

"Oh, it 's you," he ejaculated with considerable

relief, as, turning, he recognized his nameless acquaintance.

"Aye, it 's me. I kenned yer back. How are ye keepin'?"

"Fine. Ye 're no' gatherin' cockles the day, are ye?"

"Na. I gie them a rest on the Sabbath."

"What brings ye here?"

She looked at him for a moment as one in doubt,—then, evidently making up her mind to trust him, whispered confidentially, "I picks up things, bottles an' boxes, an' firewood — See here!" and opening her apron she treated him to a sight of its contents. His appreciative comments raised her spirits wonderfully.

Side by side they stood and watched the waves sweeping landwards. Toddie had almost forgotten her when all at once she spoke again. "The queer things it brings ye," she murmured, indicating the sea with a nod of her draggled bonnet. "I mind once it brought me a lot o' coal — good coal it was, too. And anither time it brought me a fish, aye, a black fish as long as yer arm." She paused, sighed thoughtfully, then added: "The doctor said I shouldna ha' eaten it."

After a while, turning weary eyes on him, she remarked:

"You 're a lonely man."

Toddie ventured to disagree. But she persisted: "Aye, but you are. The ither day I thought I seed ye wi' yer arm round a lassie's waist — doon the Lade Braes, it was — Ma certes! I was that pleased. But when ye came by me I saw it was n't you at all, but a good-lookin' chap."

"Is that so?"

"Aye, he had a beard."

"We canna all grow beards —" began Toddie, then broke off in some confusion, for he saw that she possessed a promising little beard herself. "We canna all be good-lookin'," he corrected good-naturedly.

"That 's true," she assented with earnestness, laying a claw-like hand on his arm. "That 's what I used to tell ma Jock when he called me a broom-handle."

"Nae doot he meant it kindly," soothed Toddie, for the memory seemed to rankle.

"I 'm no' sae sure," she said doubtfully. "That would be awful unlike Jock. But, hoots! When a man 's dead ye just have to try and make the best o' him. Aye, broom-handle, it was. I never could see the likeness. Broom-handle? I wonder — Ah, weel, I 've lasted him oot onyway. But you — nae doot you 're just bidin' yer time."

"For what?"

"For marryin'."

His scandalized denial failed to convince her.

"Ah!" she cried, "you 're one of the cautious ones. I see that fine. Tak' the advice o' an auld woman that 's seen a lot o' trouble, never to be led away by looks, and however much she bothers ye never call her a broom-handle."

"I 'm no' for marryin' at all," cried Toddie, who had been vainly endeavoring to assert himself. "I canna abide women."

She looked at him skeptically, then the ghost of a smile flitted across her wrinkles.

"Hoots, never think to escape. A man 's like a cockle. He just clings to his shell, but there comes a braw day and a woman howks him oot at last. I 'll see ye courtin' yet, or ma name 's no'—"

He left her so abruptly that he never discovered her name. When he had gone some little distance he cautiously looked back. She had begun to poke about in the sand with the point of a very dilapidated umbrella.

As for little girls, Toddie felt drawn to them inexplicably. When alone he pondered over this instance of the heart's depravity. Why did he not prefer little boys? It was puzzling. He sought to excuse himself in his own eyes by the reflection that all young things, even pigs, were lovable in extreme youth.

He had his favorites among the miniature women

who played in the seclusion of Logie's Lane. One frail little cripple who, aided by crutches, sought in vain to keep pace with the active legs of her robust companions, was the recipient of many a shy grimace, and even — though this only on rare occasions and when no one was looking — of pokes of sweeties. Her claim upon his affection was due not so much to her infirmity, as to the fact that he had serious doubts as to whether she would ever grow up to be a woman.

Yes, he liked children well. Their shrill, unmusical voices echoing from the gray walls, filling the twilight with animation and peopling the fancy with dreams of lives yet to be lived, cheered the lonely man on his way to his solitary home. From a distance he took a genuine and whole-hearted interest in their games. Even when the worse for liquor he would take the most elaborate precautions not to upset the atom the least secure upon its legs; sometimes going the length of leaving the infant reveler in full and undisputed possession of the pavement, while he himself tacked carefully past in the road.

At times, when confronted unexpectedly by some little mite crying as though its heart would break, he would stop, bend over it, an expression of lively commiseration imprinted upon his weather-beaten countenance, and there would ensue the following colloquy:

"What 's like wrang wi' ye, wee lassie?" (If there existed the least doubt as to sex, Toddie invariably took for granted that *it* was a lassie.)

"Boo-hoo!"

"Hoots! Ye 're no' hurt, are ye?"

"Boo-hoo!"

"What the deevil! Stop greetin'. Wipe yer face. Ye 're no' fit to look after yer bit self. What 's yer faither thinkin' aboot? Why is he no' mindin' ye, eh?"

The novelty of this surprising idea would sometimes have the desired effect. The noise would cease, and the look of profound astonishment would be fixed on this singular man through eyes bright with unshed tears.

"Ah," Toddie would chuckle. "See to that. The verra mention o' her faither does the trick. Noo," he would shove a penny in the tiny hand, "run awa' hame to him; nae doot he 's just wearyin' for a sight o' ye."

CHAPTER V

BUT it was not till five years before the opening of our story that the color of real personal feeling came to warm Toddie's lonely existence. That wonderful year brought the Major and Bob. Looking back upon his life before he had met either of these blessings Toddie marveled how he could have lived at all.

To take the Major first.

He had appeared one winter when business on the links was unusually slack.

"Are you engaged?" he said to Toddie, singling out the little caddie by chance from his associates.

"No, sir."

"Well, take my clubs."

Toddie obeyed.

"Who 's this I 've got?" Toddie whispered hoarsely to McPhee as they followed their employers to the first tee.

"I 'm told his name 's Dale, Major Dale, retired from India. What a sight o' clubs!"

"Aye, but can he *play?*"

The moment the Major gripped the shaft of his driver all doubts were dissipated.

"He 'll do fine," Toddie ejaculated, his honest face aglow. "See that! A bonnie swing. Just watch that! Ma word, there 's power for ye!"

The first hole fell to Dale in a perfect three.

Toddie had difficulty in suppressing a chuckle.

"Ye 've played before, Major," he observed, as side by side they followed the second faultless drive.

"Once or twice," assented the Major laconically, at which Toddie forgot himself so far as to wink.

The satisfaction was apparently mutual, for at the end of the afternoon round the Major said: —

"Here 's your money. Are you engaged to-morrow? No? Well I 'll take you by the month. Are you agreeable?"

By the *month!* No more uncertainty — no more following free trippers — no more struggling to make ends meet! A pound a week! Toddie had never felt more agreeable in his life. It was the realization of his rosiest dream. At least an inch higher that afternoon, he whistled himself all the way back to Logie's Lane.

Neither party had cause to regret the bargain. The years that followed but cemented the satisfaction, until there grew up between them a feeling which, if it were not friendship, was at all events as deep and abiding. And, as in love there must be

always one who kisses and one who offers the cheek, so also in comradeship it is inevitable that one shall be first in staunchness, first in unselfish devotion. Toddie led, an easy first. It was a case of ardent hero-worship from the start. He admired the Major tremendously — admired his size, his strength, his quiet manner — that yet gave the observer an impression of power — his golf, his learning, his halo of reputed military glory, his indifferent performance on the flute. He even had an awestruck admiration for his employer's occasional severity. But his crowning admiration was reserved for the fact that the Major, despite fearful temptations, was still a bachelor.

Naturally, as time went on, each had to make allowances. Dale, for example, had to overlook occasional lapses into liquor; but as no amount of drink appeared to affect Toddie's sight or judgment, it was not such a serious defect in a caddie as might be supposed.

Toddie, on his part, had to excuse a testiness that showed itself only at golf, an impatience of involuntary movement, a sudden glare of an offended eye. Once the Major had said: "Toddie, you lost me that hole." And Toddie, falsely accused, had lain awake thinking of it for a week.

And now for Bob.

Bob had come into Toddie's life one dark rainy

night when that individual had been lurching homeward, not — be it with sorrow recorded — without involuntary deviations and unconsidered halts to ascertain his whereabouts. "What 's this?" Toddie had ejaculated as he all but fell over the wriggling impediment. "Shoo! ye beastie!" But Bob would not be shooed. Tacking after his chance acquaintance across the reaches of Grey Friars' Gardens, following him like a shadow, as he steered an uncertain course between the lamp-posts of Market Street, Bob succeeded in slipping into No. 7 Logie's Lane unperceived.

That night Toddie slept in his boots. But the first thing that met his sober and astonished gaze upon the following morning was Bob seated at the foot of the bed, wagging a nervous tail, but ready to be happy and confidential if cause were shown.

From that moment they were even as David and Jonathan.

Were it not for golf Bob would have been supremely happy. "Ye see I canna take ye," Toddie had explained earnestly, the shaggy head between his knees. "It 's as much as ma place is worth. D' ye see that, Bob? Ye wouldna ruin me a' thegither, would ye now?"

And Bob had listened with his almost human eyes fixed on his master, concerned but puzzled, ready for anything, save indeed to be left at home.

Bob was a mystery. His birthplace, his age, his former master, his breed, all were secrets. No one knew aught about him, no more than if he had dropped from the clouds.

Toddie, excited as a boy, had to repeat the story of his discovery many times. It was: "Ye see, it was like this, me here, and him there; me rubbin' ma eyes, an' him waggin' his bit tail —" etc., etc.

"Found him in yer bed!" ejaculated Herd, the greengrocer's assistant; then added, not without envy: —"Man, ye *must* ha' been drunk!"

"He 'll not be a retriever, will he?" suggested Haxton, the butcher's man, doubtfully. "He 's mair like an Aberdeen terrier, yet I confess his tail bothers me."

Even McPhee, who set up for being a dog-fancier, scratched his head.

"If ye look at the one-half of him ye would say a collie," he pronounced oracularly, "and if ye look at the ither — weel, ye 're just flabbergasted."

The three visitors went away wagging doubtful heads, while Bob, knowing well that he had been disparagingly criticized, feigned profound interest in a flea.

"Send him to the police office," advised Haxton from the door.

"Deed I will not!" cried Toddie indignantly. "Did he no' come to me trustin'-like? Aye, chose

me oot, ye may say, from all the folk in St. Andrews? Na, na, Bob bides here."

But Toddie was not kept long in the dark as far as Bob's profession was concerned, for even while they sat at breakfast upon the second morning, the sound of distant bleating floated in at the open door. In a flash Bob was transformed from a patient embodiment of hunger, to a breathless interrogation. A moment he stood trembling, his whole heart visibly in his ears, then bolted.

On reaching Market Street his master saw him wheeling, charging, circling, and explaining to a flock of bewildered sheep exactly what he wished them to do.

"Guid sakes!" gasped Toddie, suddenly enlightened. "He 's a collie!"

What was a caddie to do with a collie? There was but one solution. Bob must change his ways. In pursuance of this plan he was lectured, argued with, entreated. To do him justice he listened with great good nature, but the moment he met a sheep, away he went again like an arrow from a bow. He simply could not help it. He could no more refrain from unnecessary advice than can a relation.

One consolation, that Toddie hugged to his breast, was that the dog appeared actuated only by motives of kindness. Had any doubt existed on this point it would have been dispelled by his conduct one

Sunday morning. The two friends had gone out for a walk when, suddenly, with a yelp of excitement, Bob cleared a wall.

Hastily pursuing, Toddie found — what?

Bob posing as an unwelcome instructor? No. But Bob stretched on the grass beside a newly-born lamb, licking the little creature's face with every sign of tenderness and affection.

CHAPTER VI

TODDIE was on his way to the links. The fineness of the morning, however, tempted him to pause where Murray Park debouched on to the Scores.

"Man!" he soliloquized, shading his eyes with a horny fist, "but the sea 's real bonnie the day. An' bright, it just bothers ye to look at it." Then, catching sight of the brown sail of a fishing boat dark against the light—"Yon will be the *Children's Friend.* Jock and Sandy have been oot all night. A fine life; a fine stirrin' life. Aweel, aweel, we canna all serve the Lorrd on the water. An' nae doot if His Will was known, He wouldna wish the links to be neglected."

Lost in vague yet pleasurable contemplation, he did not hear the sound of approaching footsteps until a thick-set man closely followed by a terrier was upon him.

"Mornin', Toddie," said the newcomer briskly.

"Mornin'," growled Toddie, eying him with open distaste.

"How 's yerself?" inquired the stranger with affectionate solicitude.

"Fine."

"I 'm glad to hear it. It was only the ither day that Auchtermuchtie says to me:—'Herd,' says he, 'Toddie 's gettin' auld; he 's that white aboot the gills.' 'Havers!' says I, takin' your part, 'That 's not age, that 's drink; when I canna afford one maself his breath is sort o' consolation to me.'"

"I 'll trouble you to leave me oot o' yer talk."

"Hoots, man, no trouble at all, we had nothin' worse to talk aboot. Kirkentilloch — he 's just buried his Jean, his third she was — Weel, says he to me:—'Toddie needs chastenin', he ought to marry.' Man, ye needna glower at me, I didna say it. But he 's a lad o' experience is Kirkentilloch, says he:—'Herd, ye never find real blessed peace till ye lend all yer dear ones to the Lorrd.' But I up and told him there was no fear o' you lendin' onything to onybody if ye could help it; and forby, that women just frightened ye oot o' yer life."

Toddie opened his mouth angrily, then, thinking better of it, closed it with a snap. Herd possessed the unpleasant accomplishment of rubbing him up the wrong way; yet so plausible were most of his enemy's remarks that for the life of him Toddie could never think of an appropriate retort.

"She found six Colonels, and five Dunlops, and two Zodiacs no later than yesterday," announced Herd suddenly, jerking his thumb with admiration at the terrier. "She gets cleverer an' cleverer every day. She 's just got a passion for lost balls. Where think ye she found one last week? In Tom Brown's shop."

He laughed with immense appreciation, but Toddie preserved a stony silence.

"It 's a grand, independent life," Herd hitched himself as he spoke on to the sunlit wall. "Nothin' to do but walk aboot. Ma brains an' Nell's legs; a sort o' partnership ye would say. Lucrative, too. I made five shillings yesterday. I never know what it is to want now, the Lorrd be thankit!"

He wiped his mouth with the back of a dirty hand, and gazed at the sea.

Toddie produced an old and much abbreviated pipe.

"Ye never carry now?" he inquired of Herd, between puffs.

"*Me?* No' likely! I 'm ma own master; go oot when I like; come home when I like; eat when I like, an' drink when I like." He paused, then, still gazing at the sea—"Drink when I like," he repeated softly.

Toddie suppressed a strong desire to tip him over the wall.

"How 's Bob?" questioned the unconscious Herd with patronage.

"Fine," grunted Toddie.

"Dod! I 'm glad to hear it. It 's no' natural for a dog to be gnawin' the legs off a kitchen table six days oot o' the seven. I hope ye give the poor beastie a run on the Sabbath?"

Toddie disdained to answer.

"He canna help bein' stupid," said Herd leniently. "He 's not like Nell here. Look there — see her now! By gosh! if she 's no' huntin' for lost balls in yon drain. Man, she 's a treat! But, as I was minded to say, Bob 's verra bark makes ye despair o' him; just a daft, senseless noise. But we canna expect sense in a mongrel."

"Mongrel yerself."

"Man, ye 're testy! All pride, so it is. Get rid o' it, Toddie. A humble heart is what you need. Did ye hear the sermon the ither Sabbath? No? Weel, ye missed somethin' rare, for the Meenister was uplifted. He taught us what to do wi' oor talents. Thinks I — I had two bran new balls in ma pocket Nell had hunted oot of Colonel Hardie's bag — you may say what ye like aboot dumb beasties, but ma dog sets us all an example, for she makes mair use of her one talent than does mony a Christian."

Accustomed though he was to parables this un-

expected rendering of the Scriptures took Toddie aback. Truth to tell, he resented this embroidery as an unwarrantable encroachment upon his own rights.

"See here now," Herd laid a hand on Toddie's arm, "I 'll tell ye what I 'll do. I 'll help ye teach him."

"When I want yer help I 'll come for it," blurted Toddie, shaking him off. "Bob 's no' the dog to sneak aboot pickin' up things that dinna belong to him. And more — the deil can quote Screepture to his purpose. Guid day, to ye."

As he stumped away he heard steps following him.

"Who 's Ford?" questioned the irrepressible Herd, keeping pace. But Toddie professed not only ignorance, but indifference.

"Weel, that 's queer, seein' you 're playin' with him the day."

"Eh?" Toddie stopped short.

"Aye, Dale and Ford. Ten minutes to ten, I seed it on the startin' board maself. Will Ford be a club member, think ye?"

Toddie scratched his head. "There 's auld Mr. Ford," he mused, forgetful of his annoyance. "But he 's near eighty."

"Maybe it 's his daughter — Charity they call her."

Toddie laughed the suggestion to scorn. Herd, however, wagged his head.

"Ye never can tell," he said darkly. "Women are aye where they 're least wanted. The lassie tries to play, I 've seen her at it maself. Maybe you and yer Major will be for giving her a lesson. I wish I could stop an' hear ye."

Laughing offensively, he lurched away.

Reaching the club-house, Toddie verified Herd's statement. Extremely puzzled, he consulted several of his associates, eliciting, however, nothing more satisfactory than that, as it could not be old Mr. Ford, it must be his daughter. It was early in the day to quarrel, yet Toddie was never nearer it. For a mere nothing he would have fought them all. The suggestion that his Major —"a scratch player, mind ye,"— would allow himself to be seen in the same match with a woman, rankled deeply.

"Is it likely?" he snorted with immense scorn, when McPhee tried to reason with him.

"It 's human natur'," mused McPhee with melancholy philosophy. "Ye may think to wriggle oot of it, but Natur' grips ye at the last. A woman turns yer head. She makes ye dizzy. I know what I 'm talkin' aboot, for I mind the last time but three — when I was walkin' oot —"

But here Toddie flung himself off.

Taking up his stand beneath the big window of the smoking-room — a favorite position which, from its isolation, he imagined to impart dignity to one engaged by the month — fears, irritations, suspicions all fell from him. Faith in the Major again burned high. Ford would no doubt turn out to be a visitor, a fine player. Toddie and his master would have the satisfaction of relieving him of half-a-crown at the last hole. Lovingly polishing a mashie with a wisp of sand-paper, he awaited the starting hour.

The weather contributed insensibly to his regained composure. The links were deluged with sun, the frosty, clear-eyed sunlight of northern winters that tingles in the quickened blood like some rare vintage. The far hills quivered through silver haze. A flock of sea-gulls at breakfast on a patch of reclaimed land, made a cheerful clamor; at times whirling upward like a handful of snowflakes tossed into the blue, and again settling in a flutter of varied and infinite grace. The world seemed a good place, made on purpose for masculine golf, full of sights and sounds reminiscent of old associations, reassuring, intimate.

"Ours will be the next number," murmured Toddie complacently, as Braid's stentorian voice roared out the players' names. With that he cast a glance to-

wards the club window which generally framed the imposing figure of the Major, but that hero was nowhere to be seen.

Still lost in speculation, Toddie gazed vacantly, when Tam Macintyre, who had stolen upon him unperceived, remarked: —

"Look the ither way. Yon 's him comin' across the links."

Toddie obeyed quickly; as he did so his heart sank, for beside his master's soldierly form, a golf-bag depending from her shoulder, walked a woman.

CHAPTER VII

NO sound fell upon the listening ear save the raving of the wind, a noise strangely disquieting to the imagination, suggestive of something that sobbed and moaned and wailed — of something that pleaded to be left alone yet was hounded pitilessly forward into the blackness of the winter's night. Even within the kitchen, where the solitary woman sat waiting, something of the same indescribable sensation of eerieness and abandonment made itself felt.

Devina had turned down the gas from motives of economy, but the red glow of firelight played upon her. It tipped her hair, strayed like a blush over her strong dark features, reflected itself in the somber light of her eyes, and accentuated the shapely lines of her figure. Not that she was conscious of it, for she had forgotten her surroundings, forgotten even the reason of her lonely vigil. In the dusk and the silence a familiar voice was whispering to her — the voice of the past.

How long she sat she knew not, but she was roused from retrospection by the solemn striking of

the clock. Sitting erect, she counted—"One, two, three." Three o'clock! The night was far spent.

"She 'll be comin' home soon now," she muttered to herself, then listened intently, but nothing was audible save the mournful violence of the gale.

Mechanically, moved thereto by the lateness of the hour and still bemused with dreams, she raised her arms and slowly pulled out her hair-pins. Freed from their support, the dark and luxuriant masses fell in confusion about her shoulders. Her hair was Devina's chief glory. It reached to her knees. Though dark, it had yet the peculiar quality of attracting the light. To see it smoldering in the sunshine was purely sensuous joy. When plaited it made a rope almost as thick as her arm. Devina herself contemplated its beauty with mingled feelings of half-bashful gratification and openly-expressed indifference. At times she was even haunted by the misgiving that its uncanny superfluity was an earnest of the divine determination to test her — a temptation to vainglory which, unless she resisted with steadfast humility as became a member of the U. P. Kirk, would inevitably drag her down to the horrors of the pit.

With listless fingers, hardly aware of what she did, she began to disentangle the massive and shining coils. Then, acting under the influence of some semi-conscious instinct, she rose, turned up the gas,

and stood before a small mirror suspended on the wall.

For a moment or two she silently contemplated her image, contemplated it with a stern and critical impartiality that yet had in it something of the pathetic wistfulness inherent in her nature. But as she gazed, a swift frown darkened her face.

"What 's the use o' it," she muttered with bitterness. "Much good it 's done ye." Then abruptly, and in sudden panic: "What 's this? Undressin' in the kitchen! What would the mistress say? Think shame o' yersel' for a daft auld wife!"

All at once, clearly distinct in the silence of the night, came the rumble of distant wheels. In less time than it takes to record it, Devina was at the front door, peering into the gusty darkness.

"Ye 're late," she said as a muffled figure came quickly towards her. Despite the ungracious words even a stranger would have distinguished the note of real solicitude.

"Why did you sit up?" came a fresh young voice. "I never meant you to do that. I have the key."

"Hoots! Can a key unfasten ye behind? A godless hour o' night this to be gallivantin'. Come away to yer bed."

As they entered the bedroom, Charity cried out: —

"A fire? That *is* nice of you. And soup? De-

vina, you spoil me. Why —" She broke off and gazed up at her attendant in wonderment.

Devina betrayed instant confusion. Her hands sought her head.

"I 'm sorry," she apologized gruffly. "I wasna thinkin' what I was doin'."

"It 's not that, but —" She touched a long and dusky tress. "I 've never seen your hair down before. It 's ever so much thicker than mine. Devina —" She looked up with smiling admiration into the self-conscious face —"Devina, you 're handsome."

"Havers!" cried Devina, visibly flattered, but protesting.

"But you are. Very handsome. Every one must think so. I wonder why —"

She did not finish the sentence; and Devina, apparently unaware of the omission, began to relieve her of her cloak.

It was a pretty picture that was given to the gaslight. But, charming as was the costume, it was the face that attracted, for its dominant characteristic was a peculiarly endearing and sunny charm.

And it was evident that Devina too was of this opinion, for as she stepped back, the cloak still in her hands, her eyes reflected nothing but a loving and whole-hearted admiration.

Suddenly aware of inspection, Charity smiled.

"Do you like it?" she asked. "Do I look nice?"

Devina sniffed, and feigned immediate interest in the cloak.

"It 's a Godly heart I 'm lookin' to see in you, Miss Charity, and not merely a hankerin' after earthly braws. In the midst o' life we are in death. Here, stand still till I undo ye."

"The lace is beautiful, is n't it?" commented Charity, touching it lightly.

"It 's weel enough."

"Well enough! Why, it 's the making of it. Of course there were several prettier dresses. Lily Logan's now —"

"Her. Set her up! A gawky, red-headed washin' pole, so she is. With a neck on her like a scarecraw. She couldna hold a candle to you, dress or no dress. Umph, were there ony ithers?"

It is pleasant to record how unexpectedly gentle was the touch of this serving woman's hands, hard and work-worn though they were, and with what obvious and proprietary pride she waited upon her mistress. Nor is it less pleasant to tell of the affection and childlike dependence—as though the elder woman were a sister rather than a servant — with which Charity accepted her services.

"Did you help the Master to bed?" asked the latter, seated before the fire and sipping soup.

"Of course."

"Poor Daddy, he's getting very old, Devina; and very feeble; I hope he did n't miss me much."

"Hoots, he never missed ye at all! Says he, 'I'm glad she's enjoyin' herself.' 'It's good for her young legs,' says I. Then when I'd given him his pipe, says he:—'You and I get on fine, Devina.' 'Onybody would get on wi' you,' says I, 'for ye're no' like a man at all.'"

"And what did he say to that compliment?"

"Compliment? I never pay compliments. It was the truth. For a more civil-spoken auld gentleman I never wish to wait on. Oh, he will have his bit joke! He canna help that — somethin' aboot dancin' it was, but I just told him that we auld folk were better at home."

"Old folk? What nonsense!"

"Na, there's no nonsense aboot it. I'm thirty-three, ma dear, just an auld maid. But what does it matter; naebody cares."

"Thirty-three's not so very old. I'll be thirty myself in seven years. And besides I care."

Devina's face glowed, but she only said: "Yer hair's comin' out; ye put too many French dentifrishes on. Nothing touches mine but cauld water, an' it was the same with ma mother before me. Keep yer head still. What like dances had ye?"

She listened to the vivacious account with keen

feminine curiosity, through which shone a naïve and modest amazement.

"Have you never been to a dance?" asked her mistress, roused by her ejaculations.

"Never."

"Don't you like dancing?"

Devina shook her head. "Na, na, dancin' has never come ma way. I used to keek at them all dancin' at the fair. I aye liked the music fine, but, Lorrd keep us! I know too much aboot men to be carin' to be gripped by the likes o' them."

Charity did not smile, for there was that in the deep voice that would have stifled all temptation to merriment.

"You 've not been happy," she said impulsively, then wished the question unspoken, for curiosity connected with Devina seemed an inexcusable lack of delicacy. But to her surprise and relief Devina did not resent it. The hour, the silence, the shaded lights, the atmosphere of sympathy, had not only broken down the barriers of reticence but had obliterated class distinctions. More — they awoke in Devina's lonely heart an imperative longing to be understood by one of her own sex — to seek the alleviation of spoken words, if only words would come.

For a moment there was a silence painfully suggestive of effort, then in a low awkward voice, and

brushing sedulously at her mistress's hair Devina began:

"I might have been happy, but — how can I tell ye. It 's the way ye 're made. Some folk get all the love, an' others get none." She broke off, then with a burst of feeling strangely and unexpectedly eloquent: "Oh, it 's easy for you, ma dearie, with your laughin' wee face and bonnie manners to win love, and glad and proud am I to see it — but I 'm different. There was a time — I once thought — but that 's all over now. Naebody will ever love me. Whisht, keep still, ye needna contradict. I ken fine what I 'm sayin'. When ye 've a face that glowers like — like a ghost, ye just give folk the shudders. I 've thought about it more than I like to tell ye. Folk are blind, an' ye canna blame them, for a woman's heart is like her hair I 'm thinkin', mostly out o' sight, and it 's the false that makes the most show."

There was a note of unconscious tragedy in her voice that seemed to rise from some profound depth of sadness and disillusion. It moved Charity deeply, but fearful of interruption, and still under the spell of surprise, she sat still.

"There was father," continued Devina colorlessly. "I believe he was willin' to love me. That 's queer, is it no'? But I was hard on him. He was just a bairn, ye may say, and bairns canna thrive without

love; an' I gave him black looks and a rough tongue. What if he *did* drink?" Her voice rose harsh and aggressive. "What if he was n't honest an' sairly wanted releegion? Didna everybody love him? An' it was ma fault. When mother died —' Be kind to him, Devina,' says she. And how did I do it? I drove him to his death."

"No, no."

"But aye, it 's clear to me now. If I 'd brung him up different would he have stolen yon treesure? Would he have gone wi' all his sins like scarlet straight to the Judgment Seat o' God?"

"But — he was drowned trying to do his duty — trying to bring it back."

"And so he was, the Lorrd be thanked! And now it 's his own daughter that 's tryin' her best to rob him o' his good name. That 's just like me. Here, pass that ribbon."

"Was there no one else?" asked Charity in a low voice.

There came no answer, but the hands tying the ribbon trembled.

"Don't tell me, Devina! I should n't have asked."

"There 's little to tell, dearie, only anither mistake. But —" Her tone changed swiftly — "what right have I to trouble you, more shame to me — a young thing like you. I have to thank ye, ma

dear, for listenin' sae kindly, I canna think what made me talk like that. Hoots!—" Her hand rested on the girl's shoulder, for Charity was looking round at her with very real trouble in her eyes — " Hoots, never bother yer head about me — I 'm fine. Now, sup yer soup and say yer prayers."

Little more was said, and that little touched exclusively on practical matters, but as Devina crossed the room to put out the gas, something white on the carpet attracted her attention. She picked it up.

" That 's my program. Give it to me."

The tone of the girl's voice made Devina look at her. Charity, now beneath the bedclothes, was holding out her hand.

" What like 's a program? " she questioned with curiosity.

The explanation caused her to cry: " I 'd like fine to see it."

Charity hesitated.

" Only if ye like," added Devina with a flush.

Receiving permission she inspected it with eagerness.

" Ma word! What a lot o' dances! And will these queer marks be yer partners? "

" Y-es."

" I canna make them out. Here 's a D. an' there 's

a D. and there 's anither and anither D. further on — ten, aye eleven. And who will D. be? "

Her grave, truth-compelling eyes rested on her mistress. Charity, rosy with a pretty embarrassment, was forced to murmur:

" Major Dale."

CHAPTER VIII

THE confession of the program did not pass from Devina's mind.

And to realize to the full its effect upon her, it will be necessary to dwell upon her relations towards her mistress.

Devina belonged to that fast disappearing class of Scottish domestic servants whose interests are welded inseparably with those of their employers — who enter service with no thought of changing — who remain in it with no idea of "bettering" themselves — who become almost one of the family, honest, self-respecting, hard-working, and plain-speaking, subject to tantrums, as who among us is not? but steadfast as their native hills and, if put to the proof, faithful even unto death.

And it was but natural that Devina, entering the Fords' employment bowed down by her father's tragic death and broken by her one disastrous love affair, should attach herself passionately to the motherless girl who came into her empty life like a heaven-sent consolation, unconsciously appealing to love and fostering care.

The heart of the lonely woman — a heart too big to be articulate, capable of all devotion, all self-sacrifice — expended itself with unstinting prodigality. It gave its all and looked for no return. Yet this labor of love brought its own reward. In the day-long service, in the unsleeping vigilance, even in the practice of rigid and unnecessary economy Devina, unseeking, found temporary anodyne from sorrow. And if, in the night watches, the phantoms of dead hopes haunted her pillow, she would banish them sternly, forcing wistful dreams, and tender but unrealized anticipations to the bottom of her aching heart.

Her position in the household had from the first been one of unquestioned authority. Her fellow servants discovered, greatly to their indignation, that if they failed to please Devina they had to go — an alternative of which they availed themselves with disconcerting frequency. Unsparing towards herself, she had no thought of sparing others. As a cook she had proved a failure. Not but that her performances, viewed from the dining-room, were above reproach. Still, the meals in the kitchen were productive of nothing but discontent, aggravated by her suspicion of " nights out " and deadly hostility to " followers."

" Jane has given warning," Charity had said once, when she was old enough to visit the kitchen for the

purpose of "receiving" rather than "giving" orders.

"A good riddance," Devina had retorted grimly. "That is the third housemaid in six months."

"Weel, we 're better without them. A set o' silly hussies, aye thinkin' of their faces or their stomachs. I 've no patience with them."

Elevated to the rank of lady's maid — a promotion due more to interest than suitability — Devina took kindly to her new duties. It pleased her well to be the personal attendant of "the mistress." But far from being puffed up, she was not above turning her hand to anything required, or not required, of her, from sweeping floors to cleaning silver. As an overseer of slaves Devina would have been invaluable; but as one of a civilized household, expected to run in treble harness with a cook and a house-table maid it must be admitted that Devina was a sad stumbling-block. Between her and her fellows there was war perennial and bitter that stopped short only at active hostilities, for she exercised over them a grim and suspicious surveillance hard to be borne, harder to forgive.

"Do yer duty an' I 've naethin' to say," she would explain to a newcomer in a tone that announced that, as far as she was concerned, her mind was made up for the worst.

Taken to task by Charity for some speech of es-

pecial severity, she would listen with a comical mixture of penitence and obstinacy, then cry: "Did I not see her eatin' your dessert? No better nor a common thief! Aye, ye can go and see for yerself, Miss Charity; there 's only six sweeties left in the dish, and was I to let that pass? Not likely!"

Domineering over her mistress, guarding her interests with the fidelity of an honest watch-dog, enveloping her with a worship that, balked of natural outlet, struggled continually to express itself in a barren and intemperate zeal, Devina had gradually come to consider Charity as a something peculiarly her own, a treasure confided to her care during their passage through a naughty world.

The simile of the dog holds good. For even as a collie might defend a lamb from wolves, so was Devina prepared to defend her mistress from men.

Nor was she without high authority for her distorted philosophy, abounding in Scriptural quotations from which, though she usually kept them to herself, she derived an austere and melancholy satisfaction. "All men are liars," may be cited as an example.

Still, with commendable foresight she did not seek to induce her mistress to forbid them the house. Sterling common sense whispered to her that even were she successful — a result by no means probable, for Charity was not without considerable independence of character — she would, by so doing, put her-

self beyond the pale of confidence. This fear brought her heart to her mouth, for the delightful intimacy when she waited on her mistress and listened enthralled to the girlish chatter were the golden hours of Devina's life.

Forced to dissemble, and even to feign an interest in these natural foes she was far from feeling, Devina watched them come and go with profound, if secret, disapproval. Until the night of the ball, however, all had seemed well. Despite her remarks to Toddie upon the occasion of her memorable tea-party, even her jealous eyes had discovered no real cause for apprehension. Charity, coaxed artfully thereto, had always appeared ready to air her innocent views upon all male visitors with the light-hearted ingenuousness of one essentially fancy free.

But the episode of the program had banished forever all feelings of security. Too poignantly aware of the swift and insidious advances of love, Devina noted with mute consternation the infallible symptoms — the sudden illuminating silence when Dale's name was mentioned, the tell-tale blush that, like a danger signal, gave warning of his approach — and, so noting, marveled at and passed censure on her blindness.

It was characteristic of her that she blamed neither Charity nor the Major. It was to her morbidly conscientious mind as though she herself had proved

false to a solemn trust. Exaggerated as was this conviction, it yet had its roots in the soil of bitter personal experience. Seared by a great sorrow, the one preoccupation of her troubled and unselfish heart was to save this young and joyous life from a similar catastrophe. Wistfully and with infinite pathos she recalled the days when she, too, had trembled and grown glad, when the world had seemed nothing but a dream of color, and light, and music — recalled also the dark awakening, the abandonment, the despair.

Who shall ridicule her for her misgivings, extravagant though they were? Who but must pity and sympathize?

She did not give in. Something could surely be done? What? Resolutely she set herself to face the situation. It was she, Devina, single-handed against the oldest and most immutable law of nature. As she recognized the might of the forces ranged against her, there rose in her bosom a cold and deadly sensation of impotence. She strove to fight it down, angry at her weakness, but it would not be dismissed. If only she could find an ally, some one who shared her views, some one whose interests and whose happiness were equally at stake. But to whom could she turn? To Charity? No. To one of her fellow servants? Never.

CHAPTER IX

"WILL we be goin' oot this afternoon, sir?"

The Major replied in the negative.

A gleam of satisfaction shone in Toddie's eyes.

"What will you do?" questioned his master.

Toddie shifted the heavy bag. Their morning round finished they were standing opposite the club-house, in full view of the caddies' shelter. Out of the tail of his eye Toddie could see Murdoch and Hunter leaning on the railings. Hastily assuming a confidential attitude, intended to convey to these unbelievers that he and his master were deep in one of the long and intimate talks of which he was in the habit of boasting, he said gratefully:

"Aweel, Major, this is verra kind o' ye — verra kind indeed. Ye see, I was asked to do a job, wheelin' rubbish it was, oot o' Mister McCrae's garden. Ye see, these builder chaps have dumped it doon on his bit grass, an' him that partic'lar. So Mister McCrae up an' says to me, 'Toddie,' says he, 'I 'll give ye tuppence a load to wheel it doon the lane.' Ye see, he was standin' like as it might be you —"

"I quite understand," interposed the Major. "Good day."

Cut short in the full swing of recital, Toddie was left with open mouth. And to make matters worse an ironical laugh from Murdoch was unpleasantly audible.

"Here, Major!" he cried imploringly to the broad retreating back. "Ye 're makin' an awful mistake. That 's not what I 'm goin' to do at all."

Dale turned round. A look of long-suffering, severely strained, pushed Toddie straight to the point.

"I 'm just goin' to take Bob for a run."

"Bob?"

"Aye. Ye 'd be astonished at his cleverness. He 'd find oot I 'd been cartin' rubbish. He 'd smell it on ma boots. He 'd be sair disappointed. Hoots, naebody kens better nor you, Major, that when ye have a dog dependin' on ye, ye canna just do as ye like."

The Major smiled. Toddie flashed a triumphant glance at Murdoch, then indulged in the whimsical grimace he fondly imagined to be indicative of merriment.

"That 's so. That 's a fact," he cried in high good humour. "And you, Major, what are ye goin' to do yerself?"

For a moment Dale — a person of no little dignity — was of a mind to administer a snub, but so guile-

less and friendly was the little caddie, so transparently unaware of having overstepped the bounds of professional etiquette, that he could not find it in his heart to voice it.

"I 'm going out to tea," he announced gravely.

Long after the swing doors had snatched his master from sight, Toddie stood staring blankly at the club-house.

"Goin' oot to his tea," he muttered as he turned away. "To his tea — with her, I 'll be bound. Lorrd help him!"

Even the behavior of Bob — wild with excitement at the prospect of the unusual walk — failed to dissipate his melancholy.

The friends shaped their course for the sands — Toddie, silent, brooding, his head bent, his hands plunged into his trousers pockets — Bob, careering far and wide savoring the joys of freedom — excursions to sample irresistible odors, alternating with reassuring and affectionate visits to his master.

Protracted dejection, however, that even the sight of a sea-gull is unable to alleviate, is apt to prove infectious. Bob began to realize that something was wrong. Why was his master sad? It was unusual. It was plainly necessary that he, Bob, should administer comfort. Full of this idea he laid a stick proudly at Toddie's feet, then stood aside with loud barks of joyous anticipation. But Toddie walked on.

No whit discouraged, Bob repeated the performance.

"Bob," said Toddie, coming to a halt and rousing himself, "Bob, I 'm not mindin' ye."

Bob looked with insinuating eagerness first at the stick and then up into his master's face.

"I have nae heart for sticks the day," explained Toddie.

Unwilling to disappoint the eager little creature, however, he complied with the vociferous entreaties. But it was a poor, half-hearted throw, and afforded no real satisfaction to four active legs longing for exercise. Even Bob was forced to admit that there exist human moods that lie beyond the reach of sticks. Giving it up as a bad job he came to heel. And thus they fared forward, man and dog, two small and slow-moving figures, over the wide and desolate sands.

The afternoon was cheerless. Overhead, heavy and ominous clouds passed sullenly. At times the bitter wind fell upon the comrades, then fled seawards, snatching at the waves and blowing backwards in long fringes of foam. The dark line of dunes that upreared themselves against the west, and lay like a rampart between the beach and the links, stood out, naked, full of gloom. When the wind lulled, the sea could be heard moaning disconsolately. Behind them, St. Andrews perched upon the gray cliffs was

all but lost in the murky atmosphere. Nothing moved, nothing was alive above and about this dreary expanse save the mysteries of sea, and wind, and cloud. Though but little after three o'clock, the northern winter had already enshrouded the scene in dusk. One might have said that night had come, had it not been that low in the west, through a rift in the wind-blown wrack, there still shone a lurid and watery gleam. The pervading sentiment of the hour and place was one of infinite melancholy.

Toddie, still a victim to forebodings, seated himself on a small hillock upon which tall and feathery reeds bent to the fitful violence of the wind. Bob, nothing loath, followed his example, nestling close to his master's side for warmth and protection. He had the air of one silent from sympathy.

"Bob," said Toddie suddenly, putting his arm round the patient form, "Bob, he 'll be drinkin' his tea the now."

Bob licked his lips. Toddie continued:

"I wish I knew what she was after. I mistrust her. Women, they 're that soft ootside and that hard inside, that an unsuspectin' man has nae chance at all.— Are ye listenin'? "

Bob gave the required assurance. Toddie meandered on:

"Ye see, it 's no' ma place to meddle. He 'd tell me to mind ma ain business — as if this wasna ma

business, me that has carried for him five year come Martinmas! But I 'm bothered, I am indeed. He 's nae match for her in craftiness — scratch player and all though he is. Book learnin' is all verra weel, but when it comes to meddlin' with a woman, hoots, it 's no more good to ye nor a split ball. What are ye after now? "

The remonstrance was not unreasonable, for Bob was engaged in an attempt to bury himself inside his master's waistcoat.

" Ye see," Toddie went on, obligingly unfastening a button, " it 's help I 'm needin'. I can do nothin' by maself. I 'm just a fool at the thinkin'. Man! if I could only find somebody — Here! for ony sake lie doon, what are ye aboot? "

A touch of exasperation rang in his voice, for Bob, springing from his warm retreat, began to bark furiously. His curiosity aroused, Toddie stared in the direction indicated. He had not long to wait, for, even as he looked, round an adjacent hillock, black against the dark dunes and the ominous sky, came a woman.

CHAPTER X

TODDIE sat still. So silently and unexpectedly had the intruder appeared that he had neither time to avoid her nor to retreat. At first he hoped she would turn to the left where an opening in the low hills led to the sea, but undisturbed by Bob's outcry and apparently deep in thought she continued to advance straight upon them. When she was within a couple of yards it was with astonishment that Toddie recognized Devina.

The recognition was mutual. Devina came abruptly to a standstill.

"You!" she ejaculated in a tone of disapprobation.

"Aye, me," blurted Toddie defiantly.

Despite his courageous attitude he stared up at her with considerable apprehension. Dressed as usual in black, she loomed above him, dark against the dusky background; appeared indeed to be a symbol of it. It was as though the desolate sands, shadow-haunted and oppressed with imminent night, had metamorphosed themselves into her lonely form.

Not that Toddie was moved by any such fanciful

imaginings. But her face held him. Singularly handsome, singularly masterful, from the steady eyes to the firm mouth, its suggestion of underlying strength troubled him, as did its expression of melancholy. This — he vaguely felt with something akin to awe — was no shiftless, garrulous specimen of her sex, such as he heard railing in Logie's Lane of an evening, but a woman steadfast and sparing of unnecessary speech as the Maiden Rock, that isolated pinnacle that, breaking the iron coast-line to the south, frowned down upon the sea.

"What are ye doin' out here?" she demanded.

"The sands is free," he retorted.

She looked as though she would fain have contradicted this statement. The silence that ensued was long and full of hostile constraint. Ancient prejudices were at work in the minds of each. Yet neither would speak, and neither would retreat.

From Toddie's point of view Bob's behavior at this crisis was not only inexplicable but inexcusable. Instead of supporting his master, as in duty bound, he — by nature undemonstrative to strangers — actually made friendly overtures to the enemy, and more astounding still, they were accepted with a species of grim toleration.

"That 's a nice wee dog," she said awkwardly.

"No' bad," muttered Toddie, scowling reproach at Bob, but inwardly flattered.

The wind swept down upon them, a cutting blast that pierced to the bones, for the distant hills were white with newly-fallen snow. Devina clutched at her hat, and Toddie volunteered the information that they were "bonnily protectet" by the sand-dunes, but otherwise both seemed to take the inclemency of the weather as a matter of course.

All around, upon the innumerable little hillocks that dotted the higher sand-slopes, the dry and withered reeds rustled mournfully. Behind the man and woman the shadows were massing steadily and imperceptibly. The light in the west had been slowly blotted out. All was gray with an opacity that increased momently, and sad with a sadness that rose from the dead earth like an exhalation, moaned far off in the voice of the sea and fell as a pall from the starless sky.

Something in the loneliness and isolation of their position, added to a craving for human sympathy, inarticulate and almost unconscious, drew them together. In Toddie, as he looked up at her dark and dominant figure, it gave birth to a wondering and fearful curiosity that suddenly vented itself in the question: "Do ye often walk oot here?"

"Sometimes," she replied curtly.

"What for?" he blurted.

She looked at him as though she resented his question, then said: "Thinking."

"It 's a grand place for that," he assented, then added, not without melancholy pride: "Me and Bob was doin' a bit o' thinkin' oorselves."

But she betrayed no interest in this information.

There ensued another lengthy silence.

"I must be goin' home," said Devina. She spoke as one waking from a dream, and drew her cloak more tightly about her.

"There will be a tea-party at your house the day," remarked Toddie gloomily.

"No."

"Not a party!"

"No."

"What! Just himself?"

"Just who?"

"Himself. The Major."

The name stung her. She wheeled upon him.

"Is he there again?" she cried thickly.

"He is." His master's voice caused Bob to prick apprehensive ears. "I was afeared of it. I knew it. Oh, never tell me ye didna ken. I dinna believe ye. You that waits on her. There 's no trustin' one of ye. You women are all alike."

He had risen to his feet. Confronting her, forgetful of his fear, he voiced in his accusations all the pent-up apprehensions of his heart.

The outburst took Devina aback. It was a swift and unforeseen turning of the tables. It anticipated

and silenced the anger in her that cried aloud for expression. Ingrained suspicion arose, but was instantly discarded, for it was impossible to listen to this man and not credit him with absolute sincerity. No resentment at the aspersions cast upon her sex held place in her thoughts. Bewildered, she gazed through the windy dusk at the small, thick-set form of her antagonist threatening her with angry and strangely-unwonted gestures. Then, for the first time, a faint glimmer of hope broke upon her darkness.

"Why do you care?" she said slowly.

The question was unexpected. It forced him to think, to put into words much that was to him inexpressible.

"Why do you care?" she repeated.

"Why do I care? I care — because — weel, I do care, but I 'm not goin' to tell you. I see what ye 're after. It 's a trap."

"It 's no trap," she cried. "It 's the truth I 'm wantin'. Man, what have I to do with *your* feelin's? It 's of her I 'm thinkin'."

Toddie gasped. "Of her? What of her?" he ejaculated.

The question let loose the dark brood of fears that, like poisonous snakes lived and preyed in secret upon Devina's heart. In the short and often broken sentences, where strong emotions struggled too often inarticulately, there sounded a suggestion of personal

and undying tragedy that became audible only under cover of deep and unselfish anxiety for another.

Toddie, giving ear, semi-bewildered and awe-struck, recognized his own apprehensions as in a mirror, and, like objects seen in a mirror, facing the opposite way. Her doubts did not appear to him so much distorted as misapplied. Yet such as they were, they came upon him with the startling suddenness of a revelation. For the first time in his life he was made to see that there existed another side — the woman's point of view — and it was painted for him in colors that flamed.

Gradually, when his first temptation to incredulity had been overcome, it dawned upon his simple mind that, though viewing the impending catastrophe from different standpoints, their mental attitude towards it was amazingly similar — that Devina was as resolved to save her mistress, as he was determined to protect his master.

This discovery revolutionized his outlook. It chased away much of his hostility towards his companion. Nay, more, by depriving her of the fearfulness due to her sex — for he now viewed her not as a woman but as an ally — it almost banished his timidity.

His mind teemed with new and remarkable thoughts, in which Devina played the principal part. Masterful though she undoubtedly was, Toddie told him-

self — not without inward trepidation — that she would be but a tool in the hands of a capable man. The idea flattered him.

Devina ceased to speak. She stood before him, dark and tempestuous as the gathering night. Now was the time.

"Me and you," began Toddie with extreme caution, and amazed to hear his own voice linking him with a woman, "me and you wants the same thing."

He paused. There was that in his opening words that reminded him of an election speech delivered once in his hearing by the Liberal Parliamentary Candidate. The resemblance surprised, yet delighted him. He had no idea he could be so eloquent. Somewhat flushed, he tried to make out whether his companion was duly impressed, but, owing to the dusk, failed to see her expression. Trying to fit in the remembered utterances of the popular demagogue with the case in point, he continued:

"Ye may ask yerself no' withoot reason why I 'm standin' up here the night. Weel, I 'll tell ye. We wants the same thing. We 're sensible folk. We see plain. We kens the danger that threatens us. It 's a danger o'— a danger o'— dang it! I canna put it into words, but ye ken weel enough what I mean."

Her gloomy affirmative consoled him for the breakdown. He continued: "We wants the same thing.

It 's like this. What I mean is, two heads are better nor one, even if one o' them has the misfortune to be a woman. But it will no' be easy. I can see that. But hoots, we 'll just save him in spite o' himself."

"Her," corrected Devina sternly.

"Weel, if ye do the one thing ye do the ither. But what I was minded to say — dinna speak or ye 'll put it oot o' ma head — was this, me and you must work thegither. It 's what the Major was sayin' only last week —"

"What 's he to do wi' it?" interrupted the deep voice with scorn.

"Whisht, till I tell ye. 'Toddie,' says he, and verra pleasant he was for we 'd won oor match five up and four to play. 'Toddie, it 's workin' thegither does it.' Now you —" carried away by his subject he would have laid an explanatory forefinger on her arm, but she avoided him. "You in the house and me on the links is no good at all. Ye see that?"

She acquiesced reluctantly.

"Aye," he went on, "no good at all — that is, withoot we meet. Oh, it 's a misfortune I grant ye that: but, mind ye, I do it for the Major's sake. I do believe I 'd foregather wi' the deil himself if it would pleesure him."

She listened grimly.

"What would ye advise?" she inquired, after a pause.

Toddie could scarcely believe his ears. She — this big fearsome woman — was actually asking his advice! A gush of unusual self-importance inflated his chest. But, mastering this weakness, he frowned.

"I canna tell ye the now. I must think it oot. I do most o' ma thinkin' wi' Bob. But never you fear, I 'll tell ye sure enough when we meet."

"And when will that be?"

Toddie had to listen attentively, for her voice was all but carried away by the wind. He could scarcely see her save as a blur against the deeper shadows of the sand-hills. It was as if he were addressing a phantom.

"Friday?" he proposed, after thought.

"No."

"Weel, Saturday then?"

"I canna come except on ma day out — that 's once a fortnight. And I 'm no' goin' to have the likes of you hangin' aboot the house on ma account."

"But it 's no' on your account," he blurted, with alarm.

"Weel, I 'm not goin' to stand it onyway."

Toddie snorted.

"Ye 're difficult," he said testily.

"I 'm not. I 'm doin' more than I like to think about, and that 's tellin' ye. It 's a fool-like business onyway. Still, if ye want to see me you must just make some other plan."

Toddie scratched his head.

"I 'd no idea there was such difficulty aboot meetin' a woman!" he confessed naïvely, "but I 'll tell ye — ye might be taken sick, an' forced to run for the doctor. Women are aye delicate, I hear."

But Devina murdered this proposal with scorn.

"Aweel," he said wearily, "choose yourself. It 's no' ma fancy to spend the night here, an' Bob 's wantin' his supper."

Devina pondered long.

"Cook and Jessie are goin' to a dance on Saturday night," she began grudgingly.

"The day after to-morrow? That 's awful soon. It was the week after, I meant."

"That 'll be too late; it 's now or never. Are ye for drawin' back?"

"No, no," he protested.

"Weel, then, if you think o' onything that makes it worth ma while to waste time on ye, come round to the back door aboot nine o'clock."

"I 'll come," he muttered with resignation.

Then, side by side, and in constrained silence, they wended their way towards the town.

CHAPTER XI

THE compact made on the sands was faithfully adhered to. Not once but several times did the conspirators meet to exchange news and to concoct plans. Devina's attendance upon her mistress offered perhaps greater facilities for the exercise of influence and observation than did the more mechanical and peripatetic servitude of Toddie, but so fearful was she of loosening the bands of intimacy and confidence, that, though filled with anxiety, she did not dare to voice it.

As for Toddie, when in the presence of the Major he was equally mute — at least so far as his secret apprehensions were concerned. Ever since the day of humiliation, when his master had played golf with a woman, he had been the prey of fears that drove him daily to consult the starting list with an anxious heart, and turned the Major's engagement book into an object of enthralling but troubled curiosity.

Many a time did Toddie eye it enviously.

"Who did ye say we were playin' to-morrow?" he had inquired upon one occasion with the air of a man apologizing for a defective memory, and the infor-

mation elicited: "And who the next day?" This unusual interest had caused Dale to inspect his caddie with astonishment, and such was the gravity, not to say severity, of his aspect when under the influence of this emotion, that the abashed Toddie rumbled from incoherent excuses to penitential silence.

Forced to withdraw into inarticulate depths, he contented himself with gazing at his master with such mournful intensity, such unexpressed and inexpressible affection and commiseration that Dale was moved at last to remonstrate.

"What 's the matter with you, Toddie?" he cried. "Are you ill?"

"No."

"Then for goodness' sake look cheerful. You 'll put me off my game."

A foozled approach confirmed the prognostication; and Toddie, swiftly overtaken by remorse, strove hard for the remainder of the match to school his features to a deceitful serenity.

But he eased his mind on the subject when next he met Devina.

"Ye see," he mourned, "ma verra face is no' mine, for how can I call it mine when it isna allowed to look as it likes? Na, na, looks has become a luxury I canna afford. I 'm just miserable. When I see him playin' a grand game — seventy-five it was yesterday, every putt holed — wi' marriage just hangin'

over his unsuspectin' head, I say, when I see that, it sends ma heart into ma boots — or rather into his own boots," he added with mournful exactitude, bestowing a glance at the Major's cast-off property.

These meetings were a consolation to them both. Begun with disinclination and even distaste they gradually came to be a something to which to look forward, if not with conscious pleasure, at least with feelings of melancholy alleviation. The opportunity for voicing anxieties, for railing at marriage, for bemoaning those instincts that drive even the best of men, and the most perfect of women, to seek a perilous and unaccountable pleasure in each other's society, came as a welcome relief to both.

It was inevitable that they should have occasional differences of opinion. Toddie was severe upon the vice of feminine tea-parties, which he darkly stigmatized as traps for unwary men. Devina was equally withering upon the sin of male visitors. She would point out that the devil — a regular visitor — was a male. "And does he no' go about seekin' whom he may devour?" she would cry triumphantly.

Her partiality for unpleasant Scriptural quotations tried Toddie sorely. Crawling reluctantly to their first assignation, he found her seated at the kitchen table, poring with knitted brows over an open Bible. He was about to inquire for her health, when she stayed him with a gesture.

"Here it is," she cried with a triumphant glance in his direction. "Mark this: 'Withhold thy foot from thy neighbor's house, lest he weary of thee and so hate thee.'"

Toddie, one foot upon the threshold, withdrew it in dismay.

"Who 's thinkin' of you," she cried, and her scorn was cutting. "It 's yer master I mean."

With a mixture of relief and indignation he entered the kitchen and verified the quotation.

"Aye," he muttered reluctantly, "there 's no denyin' that 's what he says. But, hoots, it 's weel he didna ken the Major. Hate him! Ma word, I wish she would. It 's her lovin' him that 's the danger."

One dark night they met at the corner of Gibson Place.

"Onythin' new?" inquired Devina curtly.

"He would n't eat but the one egg for his breakfast," said Toddie gloomily.

"How d' ye know?"

"I seed him through the window." He sighed, then added: "The ither was bad."

Her snort of indignation seemed to him to betray a deplorable want of sympathy.

"And yer mistress — I suppose *she 's* weel enough?" he asked with some bitterness.

"She sneezed twice at her tea."

Toddie's inconsiderate laughter was the reason of their parting with additional coolness.

Upon another occasion — one fine Sunday afternoon — they met in the ruined cathedral. The conversation turned upon the Major.

"The very way he walks before ye up the stair tells ye he means it," said Devina despondently.

"Aye," assented Toddie with ready admiration, "he 's a hard man to beat, is the Major."

"That jaw o' his," continued Devina with suppressed indignation. "He just sets it at ye. He 's that big, and slow, and sure; when I see him standin' on our front step he puts me in mind o' a mountain, and I just wish I 'd faith enough to cast him into the sea, so I do."

"Ah, but ye couldna keep him there!" cried his admirer exultantly. "He 'd get oot in spite of ye." Then sobering, and shaking a pensive head: "I sometimes think he 's what Professor Hay calls a wise law o' nature, bound to have its way. There 's nothin' that man couldna do if he liked. He could get on the town council to-morrow — but he 's not carin'. Slow and sure, is he? Weel, and what if he is? Is that no' ma advice to him every single blessed day? Hoots, away wi' ye, woman, ye 're just praisin' him withoot meanin' it."

She looked at him with unusual intentness. He returned her gaze, his face flushed with enthusiasm.

"You 're staunch," she said slowly, and it appeared as though she were actuated by a grudging and involuntary approval. Toddie, much embarrassed, turned the conversation to a tombstone.

They seated themselves on a low and broken wall, more by reason of the unseasonable warmth, than from sociability. An elusive suggestion of spring was in the air. Above the crenelated line of ruins, the sun sent rays that gladdened the heart. The moist earth, that lay so lightly upon the many dead, seemed to stir in its wintry rest, as though dreaming of flowers. This plot of sanctified soil that had witnessed strange and stirring scenes, bloodshed and the stormy passions of men, seemed now content to watch and wait in obedience to some Divine command. Far below, but hidden from sight by the Cathedral wall, lay the sea, an emblem of the world's unrest; but on the summit of the cliff, in God's acre, there was peace.

The quiet and pensive serenity unconsciously attuned the spirits of Toddie and Devina to subjects unconnected with the avowed object of their meeting.

"A place like this makes ye think," said Devina, her eyes on a family vault.

"It does that," assented Toddie. "I wish Bob was here."

"They was all like us once," she continued, waving her umbrella at the tombstones. "And no' sae lang

syne maybe — full o' the lust o' life — eatin' and drinkin' and thinkin' o' their clothes. And where are they now? I ask ye where? "

Her listener, secretly uncomfortable, made haste to disclaim all responsibility. But Devina scarcely heard him. For some time she remained plunged in gloomy thought, then suddenly fixing Toddie with a disconcerting and prophetic eye, said solemnly: " Me and you will be like them soon."

" Hoots, no! " ejaculated Toddie with heat. " Not for a matter o' thirty, or maybe forty year."

" What 's that compared wi' eternity? See that auld tombstone? Nae doot it covers a man, perhaps a caddie like you. And now — ye canna even read his name."

" He 's not carin'," cried Toddie sturdily. " Nae doot he 's better off where he is. Maybe he had a wife, poor chap."

" What 's that to do wi' it? "

" Everythin'. D' ye mind Abraham's bosom? "

She assented suspiciously.

" Weel, ye 'll not deny Lazarus had a bad time o' it. What wi' sores, and one thing and anither, he couldna have had worse if he 'd been born a caddie. Weel, does he fash himself over a silly tombstone now? No' likely! The Lorrd has made it up to him — though I 'm no' keen on onybody's bosom maself," he added truthfully.

Devina listened, divided between disapproval and bewilderment.

"Aye," went on Toddie more cheerfully, "I may be wrong, but it 's the way I think. It 's like the golf. It 's what I tell the Major. If ye 're off yer game the one day, ye 're on it the next. Here! I 'll tell ye a story. D' ye mind Jock McClusky — him we used to call pimple-face? I see ye don't. Weel, that man was like Job, he lost every mortal thing he had — except his wife. She had jaundice wi' just awful complications, but, hoots, naethin' could kill the woman. McClusky bore it like a man — better nor Job; ye didna find him sittin' idle on a dungheap; he just hoed turnips. 'Toddie,' says he, 'the Lorrd will make it up to me.' 'In Heaven?' says I. 'No,' says he, 'on earth.' We all thought he was daft wi' grief. But one day there comes a man who says to him: 'Are you Jock McClusky?' 'That 's me,' says he. 'Weel,' says the man, 'yer brither Tam has died in America and left ye twa hundred thousand pounds.' 'That 's a tidy bit o' money,' says McClusky, 'if ye just take a seat till I 've finished thae turnips I 'll speak to ye.' Ye see, Devina, he never kenned his brither was alive at all, but he had faith in the Lorrd. Is that no' a bonnie story?"

"It 's no' to ma taste," answered Devina sourly.

This reception not encouraging further anecdote, Toddie relapsed into a depressed silence. He was

wondering what on earth had induced him to waste his Sabbath when she spoke again.

"He 's over there."

"Who?" cried Toddie with a start. But when he had gazed in the direction indicated by her forefinger, his equanimity returned, for not a soul was to be seen.

"Father." Devina made this announcement in the gloomy yet important tones with which the Scottish lower orders are in the habit of referring to their departed. "We buried him under yon wall. It 's real bonnie; the snowdrops will be comin' up soon. Poor father—" She sighed. "He was aye hot and impatient in the flesh, but he 's cold enough now."

"I wouldna make too sure o' that," said Toddie cautiously.

"What d' ye mean?"

"Ye were lucky to find yer father's corp," he continued hastily. "They never found mine."

"Dearie me, is that so?"

"It 's a fact. Mither was awful disappointed, I hear."

Devina's eyes softened.

"The sea 's bound to give him back to her."

"Umph, maybe. But seein' that she 's been dead a matter o' thirty years, she canna be expected to take much interest in the funeral."

For a short time neither spoke. Devina, whose brows were puckered, stole a glance at her companion, but Toddie was innocently occupied in examining a thumb nail.

"Why did ye say 'maybe'?" she demanded.

"Weel, ye never can tell what the sea will be after. Whiles it's laughin' and dimplin' like — like a wee baby, and whiles it just roars at ye like a woman in drink. Na, na, I wouldna trust it to give onythin' back."

"But — the Lorrd's promised it."

"Ye mean when there will be nae mair sea?"

"Aye."

"And ye think the man will just be left high and dry?"

Her brows gathered ominously.

"That's no way to talk o' the wonders o' the Lorrd. I fear me ye're irreleegious."

Toddie avoided her eye.

"Who d' ye sit under?" she said sternly.

No answer.

"D' ye never go to Kirk at all?" she cried aghast.

He held up a protesting hand. To his surprise and even consternation, this woman's good opinion suddenly struck him as worth possessing.

"I will not deceive ye," he said earnestly, and Devina, marking him closely, was impressed with his air of ingenuous veracity. "I will not deceive ye.

I dinna trouble the meenister reg'lar like, but I 'm not what ye would call irreleegious. Na, na; I do ma best. I thank the Lorrd for all His goodness, the bonnie sunshine, like the day; and the gale we had last week. For His mercies too, Bob and the Major, and His havin' preserved me a bachelor."

"What next!" she ejaculated.

"Aye," cried Toddie warmly. "Ye may scoff. But you 're a sort o' female bachelor yourself. And more nor that. Here! you 're great on Scripture, what says the Apostle Paul aboot bachelors? He aye like them fine. He was one himself. Ye see, I ken ma Bible."

To this outburst Devina found no answer, but a feeling of having been knocked down with her own weapon lent indignation to her eye.

Toddie, pausing in a flush of triumph, wiped his face on his coat sleeve. An exclamation of strong disapprobation caused him to start.

"Where 's your handkerchief?" questioned Devina.

"I havena got one," he answered sulkily.

"D' ye always do that?"

"N-a, not always."

"What then?"

He ventured another look at her. She was sitting at some little distance from him, bolt upright. The last rays of the sun shone full upon her face, lending

to it an indescribably prevailing and even compelling quality. Recognizing this, Toddie's heart sank.

"Aweel," he muttered awkwardly, picking the plaster out of the interstices in the wall, "there 's some days when ma coat does the job fine; and there 's ithers when I 'm that warm I 'm just forced to take to the flags. Aye," he continued, answering the interrogation in her eye, "the golf flags."

"And what do the gentlemen say to that?"

Toddie pondered. "Aweel," he said at length, with a reminiscent smile, "the ither day — Friday it was — we 'd finished the match and I was polishin' up the flag, when Mr. Gibb says to me: — a very pleasant gentleman is Mr. Gibb, he ay has his joke. 'Toddie,' says he, 'where 's your handkerchief?' 'I never had one,' says I. 'Hoots, man!' says he, 'ye 've eighteen.'"

Before Devina could vent her feelings, the sound of approaching footsteps caused them both to look anxiously over their shoulders. Strolling towards them came a man whom Toddie recognized as Herd. As he neared them his habitual expression of bland self-complacency gave place to one of incredulous amazement.

"Toddie!" he ejaculated.

"Just me," grunted Toddie.

Herd's eyes, more and more amazed, wandered from Toddie to Devina, and back again to Toddie, then

gradually a broad and meaning smile made its appearance.

"I 'm sorry to disturb ye," he began with feigned gravity. But the effort was apparently beyond him, for, breaking off, he exploded into a shameless guffaw, and hastened along the path.

"Eediot!" shot forth Devina, gazing with profound contempt at his retreating form. "He 'll be a friend o' yours," she added scathingly.

Toddie shook an emphatic head.

"I canna bear the man. He just lives on a dog. He 's queer at times, but I 've never seen him as bad as this. I wonder what like 's the matter wi' him."

Devina flashed a suspicious glance, but her companion's open countenance revealed only a simple-minded astonishment.

"Ye see," he continued, "Herd's notions o' honesty are not easy accounted for, so it 's kind o' natural that his idea o' a joke should be beyond oor comprehension too. But, ma conscience, it was a sair misfortune his catchin' us thegither."

"Why?" she asked, but despite the firmness of her voice, her mind misgave her.

"Because," he explained earnestly, gazing full in her face and wagging a stumpy forefinger, "Herd 's an awful one at the talkin'. It 'll be all over St. Andrews the morn. Me and you workin' thegither — partners, ye may say. I hope to goodness it doesna

get to the Major's ears, for that would spoil our chance. But one grand thing is the Major will not listen to silly gossip. Have I not noticed it many 's the time? 'Your shot,' says he, in that quiet voice o' his and the ither gentleman has to shut up. Na, na, ye never hear him say onything aboot onybody but what 's kind. And more —" he added, bringing an emphatic fist down upon the wall, "he wouldna believe I was with you, he 's that slow to think ill o' folk."

CHAPTER XII

THE tacit understanding that existed between the conspirators was that, although a place and hour of meeting for the next interview was decided upon each time before they parted, yet should one of them lack matter of importance to communicate, he or she would be excused from keeping the appointment.

Toddie and Devina had been remarkably unanimous upon this point.

"If I dinna see ye," Toddie had remarked, "I 'll ken fine ye have naething to say. It will be an awful relief."

"Aye," Devina had assented with unusual alacrity, "and if I 'm there and you dinna come, I 'll go a walk by maself. It 'll be something to look forward to."

"That 's it," Toddie had ejaculated with hearty approval. "That way we 'll see nae mair of each ither than we can help. Ma worrd!" he came near to beaming upon her—"You and me understands each ither fine. Good day."

At the club steps one morning about lunch-time a conversation took place between Dale and his satellite.

"Can't carry for me this afternoon!" exclaimed the astonished Major. "Why not?"

"Weel, ye see, Major," explained Toddie with an air of chastened melancholy, "it 's no' to pleesure maself. Na, na, if I was to think o' that, I 'd rather be oot on the links wi' you, for ye 're sure to beat him again easy. But—" and he wagged a dismal head, "I have what ye may call a duty to perform."

Dale looked attentively at his caddie. Something in the pious resignation of Toddie's features, something solemn and suggestive of sorrow, induced his master to sink his voice to hushed and sympathetic comprehension.

"I see, Toddie. No need to say more. Of course I 'll excuse you." He was turning away, when, prompted by curiosity, he inquired: "At what hour does it take place?"

"Three o'clock," mumbled Toddie unwillingly.

"In the Cathedral grounds, I suppose."

Genuinely alarmed now, the conspirator looked up at his master. Could anything be hid from one so uncannily omniscient?

"Na," he faltered, "not this time."

"Where then?" pursued Dale, considerably mystified.

"Doon at the harbor. Just ootside the Bell Rock Inn, sir."

"What! In the street? Nonsense!"

"Na, it's no nonsense. That's the place right enough. I'm to be there the day — weather permittin'."

"But — I don't understand. You can't bury him there."

The golf-bag nearly dropped from Toddie's arm.

"*Bury!* Bury, Major?"

"Of course; is n't it a funeral?"

"Gude sakes, no! It's a sort o' unpleasant appointment I just canna get oot of. Funeral! Ma conscience! That must be a joke." And suddenly throwing back his head, and distending his mouth to its uttermost, Toddie indulged in his irrepressible chuckle.

"Ye'll excuse me, Major," he said, sobering hastily as he marked the contraction of his master's bushy eyebrows; "I ken it's an awful liberty to laugh at your jokes, but I just canna help it. The idea o' comparin' her tae a funeral —"

"Who?" demanded the Major.

Toddie stopped short. The consciousness of having nearly betrayed the great secret lent an expression of pathetic indecision to his face.

"And" — continued his master sternly, "what about me? Did n't I engage you by the month?"

"Ye did," assented Toddie, highly relieved and speaking with great earnestness, "and proud I am of it. Oh, never think I'm not grateful, sir. I'll never

do it again if I can help it. And I 'll no' see you a loser, for I 've fixed it up with Murdoch to carry for ye. Oh, a mere matter o' eighteenpence. If he doesna give ye full satisfaction, come to me. I 've lectured the man; I 've told him to mind ye to keep yer head doon, and he 's promised tae hold his breath on the greens, and to get behind yer back if it 's possible. I 'll not deny I 'm anxious, for it 's not every one would suit you, Major. When you 're put oot there 's a glare in your eyes would just give ony common caddie convulsions. But Murdoch 's prepared for the worst: and I don't mind tellin' you, sir, I 've promised him a penny if ye win, for says I tae him: 'The Major 's awful grumpy if he 's doon, but real pleasant and friendly when he 's up.' No offense to you, sir, verra natural; shows a fine sportin' spirit that does ye credit, I 'm sure."

Having personally conducted the start, with hoarse mutters of warning to the substitute, and respectful entreaties to the Major to "go in and win," Toddie found himself free to dispose of the afternoon.

"Found himself free" is a misleading expression, and one that is pointed with the bitter barb of irony; for was not the hapless Toddie bound to see the wheels of this inevitable appointment, even as captives in a Roman Triumph to the chariot of their conqueror?

She would be waiting for him, the grim, handsome woman, at three o'clock precisely — no hope of her

being late, no such feminine weakness as a complacent unpunctuality in that alarmingly well-regulated nature. Toddie sighed profoundly. He knew what would happen so well. He would see her a long way off, from the top of the brae that led down to the harbor, and at the sight his heart would conceal itself precipitantly in the Major's boots, and, as long as she was there, would absolutely refuse to return to the comfort of its owner's warm and manly breast. He would near her with slow reluctance, vainly cudgelling his brains in search of an excuse for having kept her waiting — anticipating the scathing reproach and the disapproving glance which were sure to find him speechless, awed, exasperated, yet incomprehensibly spell-bound by the overmastering dominance of her presence.

He pondered over all this gloomily as he walked slowly back to Logie's Lane.

What a fool he had been to allow himself to be beguiled into these assignations. And yet — there was no denying that she was handsome. Catch him doing it again, if only he were well out of it this time. And yet — her eyes! Aye, and that turn of her head — and the queer feeling she gave a man at times when she forgot to be alarming! Devil take the woman! He kicked an unoffending stone with the warmth of a purely personal rancor. He would think about her no more. She was a sort of disease. Yes, suffi-

cient unto the day was the evil thereof — and had he not a blessed half hour to be free, and manly, and happy? And yet — and yet —. He frowned portentously.

It was just as he came face to face with a linen-draper's window that Toddie came to an abrupt standstill. What moved him so strangely? What deprived him almost of breath? It could not have been the lady in the fashionable stays upon whose picture his eyes were eagerly riveted, for, truth to tell, he did not even see her. She was a mere coincidence — a type or symbol of the feminine arming herself for the inevitable combat; aye, protecting her heart — if she had one, the hussy! — with the very bones of whales. But the innocent Toddie gazed past and beyond her, straight at the dawn of some glad possibility, at the light of some unexpected and radiant promise of emancipation. Under this joyous influence he gave vent to a loud and cheerful guffaw. Then, suddenly, overcome with shame, for the passers-by were betraying unfeigned amazement at the sight of a caddie laughing hilariously at a Parisian corset, he lurched onwards, muttering to himself the while.

"No news! I've naethin' to tell her. I needna go. That's a grand idea. I never thought o' that. I'll bide at hame. Na, I'll take Bob for a walk. He'll be fair off his head, the beastie; aye, wi' surprise and pleesure. I wonder what she'll do? I'm

not carin'. Maybe she 'll sit on the pier and throw stones into the water. But, hoots, a woman canna throw straight. Maybe she 'll be expectin' me. Weel, what if she does? Let her expect! It 's none o' ma business. I canna make news oot o' naethin'."

Reaching his home, he let himself in and was enthusiastically welcomed by Bob. But it was towards the grandfather's clock that his anxious glance was directed.

"Quarter to three," he soliloquized. "Doon, Bob; doon! She 'll just be leavin' Gibson Place. I can see that black bonnet o' hers. Aye, aye, nae doot it sets her off fine. Bob, ma mannie, what d 'ye say to a walk? Ah, I thought it would pleesure ye; but no need to worry ma trousers. She 'll be in North Street now. It seems a peety she should have that trouble. I wonder what she 's got to tell me?"

Feeling inexplicably restless, he rose to his feet, crossed to the little window, gazed at the blank wall upon the opposite side of the lane as though he fully expected it to make up his vacillating mind, then, still absorbed in thought, returned to the fireplace.

For a whole minute he sat contemplating Bob with awful intentness, to the no small discomfiture of that sagacious animal who, convinced that he had been discovered in wrong-doing, gave voice to sundry little whines of protest and propitiation. Then, suddenly,

propelled thereto by some inward force, his eyes again sought the clock.

"Eight minutes now," he muttered; "I 've just time — but no — I 'm ashamed of ye, Toddie. Be a man. Can ye no' keep to what ye said? And yet — I 'm no' so sure it 's a sensible plan after all. Bob, dinna scratch, ye deevil! I see ye fine. It 's this way — the woman may have found oot somethin' verra important. I ought to hear it. And then, anither thing, it looks awful like as I was afeared of her. Ma word! I 'm no' afeared of ony woman! I 'll let her see. Then maybe if I 'm not there she 'll think me unceevil. I 'd be sorry for that, for after all the woman 's a woman." He sighed deeply, thrust his legs out, and shook his head at the keen, questioning eyes that were watching him from somewhere about the altitude of his knee.

"This will never do, Bob. I see fine ye 're anxious. Ye wouldna have yer master misjudged, would ye? What 's that ye 're sayin'? Ye 'd like to go to the harbor? Mind ye, it 's not for me, I 'm not carin', but I 'd be sorry to disappoint you, for there 's no denyin' that for a dog ye take a real sensible interest in the boats. Come on."

CHAPTER XIII

THE afternoon was fine, although the sun, fully occupied no doubt in shining upon other and more favored localities, held himself sternly aloof. But Toddie was too much engrossed with his own affairs to miss the sunshine, and, even had he been less self-centered, it is open to argument whether he would have given the absentee a thought.

St. Andrews is a child of the North — a child of the sea — cradled on cliffs — brooded over by storms — clad in sea-mists, and half lights, and veils of veering vapor — gray and desolate as her own naked rocks — inured to cold and rough weather as the sea-gulls that flit around her ruined towers, and live their wild free life on wind-blown surges and wind-swept sand.

Toddie was a piece of St. Andrews. Its clean caller air had made him the man he was, sound in limb and weather-beaten in aspect. Something of her air of reticence, her elemental picturesqueness, her self-respecting sufficiency, and uncompromising independence had found its way into his bluff manner and honest face. It is morally certain that his

suspicion of all strangers, save only those who contributed directly to his income, was derived from his surroundings. His primitive idea of a joke, too, might be traced to the same source. Could you imagine the Cathedral retailing a good ecclesiastical story to the Castle — presumably chuckled along the subterranean passage — and the two venerable ruins, forgetful of age, dignity and infirmities, fairly exploding into peals of jolly laughter — I say could you imagine this, then you might imagine Toddie appreciating a Southern witticism.

These points of resemblance might be added to indefinitely. For example, his inability to whistle a tune correctly, or even recognizably, Toddie owed to the town band; and his error in mistaking the odor of garbage for ozone, to the town council. His noblest conception of drama was undoubtedly "Pierrots," and his most enlightened and refined entertainment the annual fair. Yes, Toddie was extraordinarily like St. Andrews.

A person like a town? Why not? Nothing more common. We have all of us been unfortunate enough to meet a man like Glasgow, and a woman like Dundee. You cannot mistake them, any more than you could mistake a dog like Skye, or a pony like Shetland. Then again, people who live constantly together, grow, we are told, to resemble each other. It is the price we all pay for propinquity. And

what more natural than that Toddie, who had neither kith nor kin, wife nor bairn, should make good the omission by personifying and resembling his native town. The likeness was of course unconscious. No one would have been more astonished than he, had you drawn his attention to the fact. Had you done so, it is more than probable that he would have thought you were "getting at him," a form of erudite humor too subtle to be encouraged, too personal to be pleasant, and which, therefore, a Scotchman resents from the very bottom of his solemn and self-respecting heart.

But, we must apologize; this is pure and indefensible digression, for is not Toddie on his way to meet Devina, the seeds of unimagined love within his heart, but grim anticipation within his soul?

Bob kept close to his master. Even the sound of a distant sheep failed to lure him away. There exists in animals, and more especially in dogs, a loving and intuitive instinct, surpassing that of women, which enables them to read the secret thoughts of those to whom they attach themselves. It is an instrument of much delicacy, subtle as their sense of smell. Like an emotional plummet, it sounds the deeps of mental sensation, discovering strange currents, submerged rocks, and dangerous shoals. Bob was making use of it now. His master's visible preoccupation, unseeing eyes, portentous frown and

compressed lips had given him a clue which his own genius for psychological investigation was pursuing to its furthest limits.

Bob scented danger. An invisible danger, that did not even growl, was much to be dreaded. It got on your nerves, and raised your back hair. Impossible to tell when, or in what form, it would attack you. You simply were forced to wait. Inaction under such circumstances becomes an ordeal. Danger? Danger to whom? Presumably to Toddie. For himself, Bob did not care. Let peril take the form of the largest and most ferocious dog that canine imagination could conceive, Bob would have welcomed it with defiance. But where Toddie was concerned it was a very different matter. With his nose glued faithfully to his master's heels, and his remnant of a tail carried threateningly, Bob followed his human divinity as he would have followed him unhesitatingly into the very forefront of battle.

Together, but in silent Indian file, the friends reached the top of the hill that commanded the harbor. The sea lay outstretched beneath them, extraordinarily calm — here a dull and oily expanse — there a glitter as of naked steel; dotted at far intervals with the sails of fishing boats. Nearer still could be seen jagged reefs exposed to sight by an unusually low tide, black and cruel, with a lazy wash of surf whitening their flanks. Still nearer, where

the steep descending path joined the quay-side, rose the Bell Rock Inn, a structure with no pretensions to beauty, but of a solid, durable and hospitable aspect, as became a building that dispensed whisky and defied the storms of winter. At the corner, where the Inn abutted upon the highway, stood a woman.

There she was! Toddie's heart leapt, then sank. He felt ungenerously inclined to growl "I told ye so," and to lay the blame entirely on Bob, who, as the reader will remember, had insisted upon the harbor as the objective of their walk. Repressing this inclination, Toddie tried to face the inevitable, but his courage oozed away, his pace relaxed, his nervousness increased. By her attitude he saw plainly that she had caught sight of him, otherwise it is more than probable that he and Bob would have turned tail and slunk off in an entirely different direction. Again he forced his eyes to encounter her. That solitary black figure seemed to be the one important feature in the landscape. It dwarfed everything. In it were suggested the ominous calm of the sea, the sunless gloom of the land, the disquieting sense of vague yet depressing expectancy that brooded over all things. More than that, it had for Toddie all the fascination, the attraction, and the terror of the unknown. Within it might be dark and gathering storms more to be dreaded than the anger

of the ocean, flashes of wrath more to be avoided than the lightning. As he looked and quaked he felt a cold thrill run up and down his sturdy little backbone.

What would she say when she found out that he was there under false pretenses? That he had no news? Her high moral nature was incapable of deception, incapable also of forgiving deception in others. Would she resort to violence? Strange to say, at that possibility his courage returned, and jerking his head like one who recognizes that there can now be no turning back, he advanced to the encounter.

"Good day," he cried defiantly, while still at a distance.

This was a master-stroke — in active hostilities it is half the battle to strike first.

"Good day," she answered.

Screwing up his courage, he stared her straight in the face.

"Dang it! I 'll let her see who I am," he thought desperately, as if indeed there could be any reasonable doubt about the matter. His valor was of that foolhardy description inspired by fear. Yet, such as it was, it not only amazed, but filled him with a glow of self-admiration that was singularly comforting.

But, as he glared, he experienced the shock of a surprise. For the first time in the history of their

acquaintance Devina avoided his eyes. More than that, she seemed ill at ease. A warm flush, singularly heightening to the dark and stern character of her beauty, spread over the clear surface of her cheeks. And — if it does not sound preposterous to mention such irresolute adjectives in connection with Devina — she appeared to be not only nervous, but timid.

Like snow before the sun Toddie's antagonism evaporated. In its place were to be read amazement, admiration, and a relief that would not be concealed. For a moment he gaped at her helplessly, possessed by the surprise and pleasure of it; then, all at once, remembering that she was a woman, he pulled himself together.

"I 'm late," he announced with a fine assumption of indifference, calculated to let her see that whatever her sentiments, he cared not a jot.

"No," she murmured, "naethin' to speak aboot." And again he was awed by the soft, deep inflections of her rich voice.

Was this actually Devina! Amazement grew so intense as to border upon incredulity. But there was no mistaking her identity. Even Bob had recognized her, and far from considering her the danger he had been led to expect, was snuffing with affectionate interest at her skirt as if the odor was distinctly agreeable to his taste.

Together they stood in the windless gray of the

afternoon — just a speechless little caddie, thick-set, commonplace, but thrilling with emotions that seemed to have come straight from heaven, and a tall, shapely woman in black, with downcast eyes and a tinge of tell-tale rose upon her cheeks.

"I canna think why I came," she said, and with an effort her eyes met his. Within their black depths Toddie read something unexpectedly wistful that roused every ounce of gallantry that had slumbered undisturbed in his breast for forty years.

"Nae doot ye had yer reasons," he said with respectful deference, and no courtier could have said it better.

She shook her head. "No," she dissented, and neither he nor she gauged the naïve significance of the denial. "I had nae reasons." She paused, then looking towards the sea, and speaking hurriedly: "I have naethin' to tell ye. I needna have come at all. I didna mean to come, but — but — here I am."

The termination was abrupt and defiant — a touch of her old self.

"That 's awful like me!" cried Toddie, much interested.

She looked at him swiftly. Was she angry? But no, her eyes were more wondering and troubled than indignant.

"I 've no news eether," he continued, sinking his voice confidentially. "The Major has had nae time

for nonsense. Golf 's a grand thing for keepin' a man oot o' mischief. At first — I 'll no' deceive ye — I thought of takin' Bob for a run. Not comin' near ye, ye understand. But somehow or ither,— it beats me — what wi' lookin' at the clock, and what wi' thinkin' of you, I — I 'm here, too!"

So engagingly impressive was his manner, so frank and ingenuous his confession, so entirely and delightfully did he ignore the real factor in the case, that as he stood before her with one horny hand amicably outstretched, he would have disarmed a tigress. And Devina was no tigress, but a woman profoundly troubled, listening with reluctance and dismay to the voice of conflicting emotions.

"It 's queer, is it no'?" commented Toddie. "It 's what the Major would call a coincidence."

"What 's that?"

"Weel, I 'm no verra sure maself, but it 's a sort o' fluke — a thing ye canna take the credit of — like holin' oot in one, ye understand?"

She assented doubtfully.

"And now," he continued more cheerfully, "what will we do next?"

"I 'm goin' home."

"Ye canna mean it!"

"I 've been here long enough."

"But — you 've only just come!"

"It was daft of me."

"Na, na, dinna say that. It was real sensible and — and friendly." He broke off, astonished to hear these sentiments issuing from his own lips; then, all power of self-criticism swamped in the rush of his eagerness to keep her: "Here! what the deevil does it matter what we talk aboot! If ye like I 'll no' talk at all."

A faint smile hovered round the corners of her mouth.

"There 's no call to swear," she said demurely — but her eyes still twinkled.

"Ah!" chuckled Toddie much relieved. "That 's right. Smile away. I like fine to see it. I 'll tell ye what I 'll do — I 'll take ye for a walk."

Had he been proposing to treat her to the Dundee pantomime Toddie could not have made the offer with a more prodigal and "damn-the-expense" air. From Devina's expression, however, it could not be inferred that the unusual pleasure commended itself to her. She looked into his eager and smiling face with extreme doubt, with a hesitation so long and troubled as almost to appear distress.

"Weel," said Toddie encouragingly, "are ye for comin'?"

"What 's the good of walkin'?" she objected, wavering.

For a moment he scratched his head then, seized with a bright idea, cried: "It 's good for the legs.

No' that mine needs it, for they 're always walkin'; but, what wi' sittin' all day in a chair, yours must be awful soft. Oh, no offense, ye needna jump; maybe I shouldna have taken the liberty o' mentioning them at all, but I 'm no' used to suitin' ma talk to leddies, and forby ye canna deny ye have them."

"I dinna wish to deny it," she said loftily, "but if ye canna suit yer talk to me I 'll just go home."

"Na, na; I didna mean that at all. I said I wasna *used* to it, but I can try. A man can dae nae mair. Just you say what ye like best to talk aboot, and if I says onythin' onsuitable, just you give me a dig in the ribs. D' ye see? That way we 'll get on fine."

So earnest was he, so visibly anxious to please, that Devina thawed in spite of herself.

"Umph," she commented, then with an air of indifference: "Which way will we go?"

"Doon by the rocks," he suggested. "Naebody will think o' lookin' for us there."

Without further talk they set out, side by side.

CHAPTER XIV

DEVINA'S nervousness and Toddie's amazement thereat having worn off, the friends relaxed into something not far different from their former strained relationship. That she should be out walking with a man, with no visible excuse, save indeed the questionable pleasure she experienced in his society, appeared to Devina a weakness worthy of the severest condemnation. It put her hopelessly in the wrong. It rankled. It caused her to fume inwardly. Had she not that very morning spoken scathingly to Jessie concerning plumbers and the offense of accompanying them in their evening constitutionals? And here was she, Devina, actually walking with a caddie. Her upright, self-respecting nature winced at this culpable backsliding from the solitary path of virtue, at the hypocrisy that could openly denounce a course of conduct in others which she herself practised blushingly in secret. According to her rigid code of morality be he caddie or plumber, a man was a man for a' that, and unto no woman worthy of the name was it permitted to de-

mean herself by encouraging his existence, save indeed in exceptional cases, such as the transaction of lawful conspiracy. To discover herself acting contrary to these principles, and to know Toddie for the cause, forced her back upon the old forbidding demeanor singularly damping to the scarce-fledged ardor of her companion.

He, poor fellow, was also suffering from a bit of reaction. As he lurched along by her side, the crown of his battered cap upon the level with her shoulder, essaying to keep step with her long and masculine strides, Toddie cast from time to time a nervous look up into her face. What he saw there by no means reassured him. The newborn charm he experienced in her society had fled with this return to hostile and monosyllabic tactics. She compelled him to call to mind the Major's allusion to the funeral. It seemed dismally appropriate now. Indeed Toddie could mention several funerals that had been festive in comparison. In a word she forced him to remember that she was a woman — a fact he had almost lost sight of — and what could be more alarming and distasteful to a bachelor of Toddie's time-honored prejudices?

On their way to the rocks they passed the old cockle gatherer. She was groping in a little pool that lay imprisoned between two boulders. As she recognized Toddie she looked from him to his com-

panion, then smiled — a smile of much feminine subtlety.

"What did I tell ye?" she called out triumphantly, jerking her wisp of gray hair out of her eyes.

Quitting Devina's side, Toddie hastily turned back.

"I see fine what ye 're thinkin'," he said in a gruff indignant voice, "but ye 're wrong."

"Who 's that?" questioned Devina, when he rejoined her.

"Just a daft auld wife," responded Toddie, still much upset.

"And what would she be sayin' to you?"

"Oh, just nonsense."

"Aye, but what was it? What 's that she said she told ye before?"

Thus cornered, Toddie growled inarticulately. Then, becoming aware of her eyes fixed upon him, and full of feminine curiosity, he added defensively: "I canna repeat it."

She tossed her head and looked away.

For some time they walked on in silence. Having traversed a space of level sand, they at length reached the rocks. These ridges and reefs, deeply concealed by water at high tide, were now a chaos of boulders of very unequal size, and densely covered for the most part with a matted garment of black and glistening weed. Here, the naked rock peeped through

— there, colonies of shell-fish adhered to the sides and crests, so small, innumerable, and close that they had the appearance of patches of black velvet. Between these boulders lay pools fringed with delicate and feathery growths, within whose becalmed and translucent depths the gazer saw at will his own face and the mirror sky, or a submerged and miniature world. Sand and shells, the gleam of wet pebbles, evidences of humble life made beautiful with vivid color intensified by the motionless element, all lent to these tiny rock-gardens a charm as rare as it was unexpected. As the shadows of Toddie and Devina fell upon their hiding-places, little crabs scurried away in sudden alarm, disappearing beneath the crystal-like substance that seemed less a liquid than a denser atmosphere, so pure was it, so suggestive of being renewed and renovated daily by the strong salt flood of the sea.

The footing upon this playground of the waves was precarious in the extreme. It necessitated the agility of an acrobat and the balance of a tight-rope dancer. Bob, shivering from the effects of more than one involuntary bath, made frequent appeals for help. Indeed he neglected no means within his power to point out to his companions that, as far as he personally was concerned, he washed his paws of the whole undertaking.

Shod in thick nailed boots, Toddie fared better

than did Devina, for her foot-gear was thin and but ill-suited to cope with the difficulties of the situation. More than once he watched her anxiously over his shoulder, restrained, however, from offering her assistance by a feeling of awkwardness. Though unused to women, and unaccustomed to criticize, even he could not but observe and admire her gracefulness, her strength, and her decision. Devina tackled slippery and insecure boulders with a quick judgment and a light and accurate foot — mounting, descending, leaping, landing, balancing, never far behind her guide as he led the way with the ease of one born and bred upon the coast. Her fine figure was seen to advantage against the somber background. Lissom as that of a girl, it still retained all the charm of youth. And indeed who shall say that she was more than a girl, this strong stately woman, with her masses of dark hair ruffled by the unwonted exertion and the glow of healthy blood dyeing her cheeks? Not Toddie for one, be sure of that.

On the far side of a crevasse he paused and looked back. A gulf lay between them, filled to the brim with deep water, and surrounded on all sides by precipitous and seaweed-covered rocks. A gulf surely too wide to be crossed without masculine assistance.

"Here," he cried to her, leaning far over the pool, "give me yer hand."

"Out of the way," she exclaimed impatiently, and, even as she spoke, she sprang.

The impetus of her leap, and the treacherous surface upon which she alighted, caused her to slip. There broke from her an involuntary cry. Quick as thought his arm was round her, and she was dragged to a position of safety. To Devina the sensation was not only novel but unexpectedly pleasant. For a moment she looked at her rescuer, a new light within her eyes.

"You 're strong," she said with slow and unconscious approval. And Toddie, outwardly unmoved, glowed at the compliment.

Gaining the farthest limit of the rocks, they seated themselves upon a convenient ledge situated high above the advancing tide. Bob, somewhat more reconciled, condescended to make use of the tail of his master's coat.

A quarter of a mile now separated the trio from the cliffs that formed the coast-line. Before, and on either side of them, where the promontory thrust itself outwards, lay the sea. Through the haze that had begun to creep landwards, several fishing-boats could be faintly distinguished. With lowered sails they rocked gently at anchorage, awaiting the high tide that would permit them to enter the harbor. A great calm lay over all — one of those calms that visits this iron-bound coast not infrequently in winter,

and during which all inanimate things seem either dead or sunk into profound slumber. Barely stirring the breathless air came faint, thin cries of distant sea-birds, far out, in the offing. These sad and almost inaudible sounds, suggestive as they were of infinite space and unfettered lives, lent a strange, wild sweetness to the scene. Nature herself seemed to be present, brooding upon her masterpiece, the sea.

The isolation of their position, combined with the sense of comradeship it engendered, went far towards dispelling the restraint that had tied their tongues, and before many minutes had passed they found themselves chatting with surprising sociability. Toddie had been the first to break the silence.

"He 'll be goin' to the sixteenth hole now," he mused, and there was a note of envy in his voice. "I hope Murdoch winna forget to tell him to keep his head doon. The Principal's Nose is aye a nasty bunker. We was badly in it this mornin'. 'Toddie,' says he, real testy —"

"Who?" demanded Devina with a frown.

"The Major, of course."

"See here, you 've not brought me out to talk aboot that man?"

"Why not? We could n't get onythin' better to talk aboot."

"Weel, if ye do I 'm not goin' to listen; that 's tellin' ye."

"Dearie me! Is that so? What sort o' thing should I say?"

Again a faint smile stole across her averted face.

"Na," mused Toddie, scratching his head, "I suppose not. But — there 's awful little I can talk aboot except the golf."

"I wonder at ye. If I was a man —" She broke off, amazed with herself.

"Aye, what would ye do?" cried Toddie, leaning forward.

Her gloved fingers plucked inadvertently at the seaweed — her eyes gazed at the water gurgling and eddying around the rocks.

"I 'd make somethin' better of ma life. I 'd try to do some good with it. There 's an awful lot o' poor ignorant folks in — in darkness. Aye, poor bodies that hasna had a chance. I 'd like to give them a chance."

"A chance o' what?"

"A chance of raisin' themselves."

"Oho, it 's a meenister you 'd be!"

"And why not? What are ye smilin' at? Is it not a grand thing to save lost sheep?"

"That 's like Bob," commented Toddie thoughtfully.

"Whiles," she went on unheeding, a flush mounting to her face, "when I 'm listenin' to Mister McColl

I just burns all over like the Apostles when the tongues o' fire fell on their blessed heads."

"Gude Sakes!"

"Aye, I canna contain maself. I can hardly sit still. I 'm just yearnin' to dae somethin'— I dinna ken what — but somethin' grand and useful — somethin' that 'll help folks, I mean. And then, me fair uplifted, all at once I catches sight o' a silly hat, and ma bonnie castle o' dreams just tumbles doon. For what can a woman do but bide at hame and dust, and mend stockings, and dress Miss Charity's hair?"

"Weel, weel! We canna all be meenisters. And nae doot if ye does yer duty in yer ain station, the Lorrd will excuse ye."

"Ye think that?"

"I do. There 's times I 'd like fine to be a Club member; but, thinks I, the Lorrd kens best."

She looked at him long.

"I believe you 're releegious after all," she said, and there was wonder and solemnity in her voice. Toddie smiled deprecatingly. She continued:

"I misjudged ye. I see that. I 'm sorry. It will be a lesson to me no' to judge folk — I 'm far too fond of doin' that. But —" and her brows gathered again, "does it no' make your heart ache to see the awful wickedness of St. Andrews?"

"Hoots! no. We get on fine. There 's just the one thing we 're needin', and that is a tariff on the auld course."

"Na, it 's love we need — to love one anither."

His start and look of alarm were lost upon her for she continued with great earnestness. "We 're all hard at heart, somethin' terrible. Oh, I 'm as bad as the rest. I just say things I 'm ashamed of. The day now, I came awful near to slappin' Jessie's face — it 's that impident. But you men are the worst. A body canna go oot on a Saturday night withoot hearin' language no' fit for a Christian country. And then,— there 's the drink."

Toddie shifted uneasily.

"It 's the curse o' Scotland."

"Na, na, not sae bad as that."

"It is," she vociferated, turning indignantly upon him. "It makes a man a beast — worse nor a beast. Think of his poor defenseless wife and his wee innocent bairns robbed of their bread."

"He might be a bachelor," suggested Toddie hopefully.

"I tell ye," she continued, unheeding, "if I was the King or the Provost I 'd throw all the whisky in Scotland oot there, aye, into the sea."

Toddie gasped. His eyes — distended with consternation at the bare notion of such a national ca-

lamity — gazed at the spot indicated by her resolute forefinger.

"Would ye?" was all he could ejaculate. "Would ye now?"

"I would. And so would you."

This was the last straw.

After a pause she continued.

"What made me think o' speakin' to the likes of you at all was that I kenned ye for a steady, sober man. I 'm not often mistaken. Ye dinna say very much, but there — I see by your face ye thinks with me."

The countenance in question had become suddenly suffused with a guilty red. Fain would poor Toddie have contradicted her — fain would he have denied the possession of the unnatural virtues thus unexpectedly imputed to him. But, as he opened his mouth to speak, the sudden, overpowering conviction that, were he to deny it, he would forfeit forever her esteem, changed what he had been about to say into:

"Aye, aye. Weel. Umph! Maybe."

"I knew it," she cried, and Toddie's conscience smote him hard at the approval in her voice.

CHAPTER XV

FROM this moment to the end of the interview a marked change might have been observed in Devina's manner towards her companion. Her severity almost disappeared — her voice lost much of its hardness, her eyes much of their disapprobation. And if she still retained her old abruptness and "dourness"— an ungracious trait, a national as well as a personal characteristic — it was less on account of a desire to repel, than the involuntary expression of a proud, shy, and modest self-consciousness.

The twin discovery that "the man" was not without "releegion" and eschewed liquor were the chief factors in the transformation. Although she would not own it, even to herself, Toddie had risen appreciably in her estimation. From a brand to be snatched from the burning, he had become a torch that might be expected to give light to a naughty world. Nor was this change unnatural. When a woman begins by disliking a man, and suddenly discovers that she likes him, the reaction in his favor is apt to carry her far. Her very generosity becomes his ally, and seeks to compensate him by pres-

ent kindness for all he has suffered from her injustice in the past.

The only fear is that she may overdo it.

For the first time then since her unfortunate love-affair, Devina showed signs of a leniency towards masculine society. She found herself listening with complacence and even with interest to the man's point of view, and, what is more, actually forgetting to condemn it. Several times she surprised herself in the very middle of a smile, for Toddie's naïveté and frankness tickled her sense of humor — and, Devina must indeed have been badly introduced to the reader if this does not show an immense advance along the path of unconscious friendship.

A world of men — typified by Archie, the rock upon which her fair vessel of hope had foundered — gave place in slow and laborious transition to a world of men exemplified by Toddie. A shattering of disbeliefs is sometimes as poignant as a shattering of beliefs. The mind, like the body, is the slave of habit, and in the severing of chains necessitates labor. Devina felt this, but only partially, for her feelings towards Toddie had barely crossed the borderland that separates tolerance from disapprobation. To her he was still " a man," a thing apart, as aloof from her existence as though he were an inhabitant of Mars. But there was nothing to force a woman to assume the defensive with him. He was just a plain,

down right, civil-spoken body, so unmistakably well-meaning that he could not fail to inspire confidence. And yet there was something so engaging in his very simplicity, something so childlike and spontaneous in his habit of blurting out just what he thought, that it would have taken a far harder-hearted woman than Devina to deny him a modicum of sympathy.

More — she pitied him. Yes, she was convinced that the body was sorely in need of feminine guidance. She began to observe him. Her quick eyes detected the absence of a button. Continuing their researches they noted and condemned the tear under his left arm where the heavy golf-bag was wont to hang. She longed to do battle with that coat — not for the sake of its wearer, she reassured herself as to that, but out of a sense of decency.

Pity! The very light of heaven in a good woman's eye. But a dangerous emotion to bestow upon a single man when a woman desires to remain on purely platonic relations with him. Devina, however, was as unconscious of danger as a babe unborn.

Many things puzzled her when she had time to ponder over them. That she should speak to him so freely of matters and feelings which she considered sacred was astounding. Her want of reticence filled her with amazement, with incredulity. Unknown to herself, it went far towards revolutionizing her outlook.

As for our hero, he too was most pleasantly astonished. A woman was evidently not such a poor companion after all! It was a revelation. He wondered that he had not found it out before. But, pondering thereon, he came to the conclusion that Devina must be one bright exception to her sex. His good fortune in having discovered just the one companionable and safe woman in the world struck him as amazing. "None of yer silliness, but just sensible," was his verdict, as she assented to the majority of his statements. Her present attitude towards him — an attitude that might almost be termed genial — speedily thawed his reserve. He expanded and laid down the law, more and more at his ease. It was as good as being with Tam. He gazed with increasing confidence into the dark face turned appreciatively towards him, and his eyes expressed a satisfaction and an approval, which, however, his lips were far too cautious to corroborate. Her unspoken, yet visibly golden, opinion of him warmed him to his sturdy backbone. That it was entirely unmerited mattered nothing. That was a mere detail. Toddie silenced his conscience so successfully that he persuaded it to go to sleep, while he reveled in the delightful delusion that he was a sober and religious member of society. It was so unusual. He scarcely recognized himself. He became firmly convinced that nature had really intended him to be

virtuous. That he had not been so in the past was merely an accident — a postponement. Had he not the future for his own? Time enough yet. No occasion to hurry. Such a reformation demanded thought.

Meanwhile it was all very pleasant — very pleasant indeed. Devina's praise contributed not a little towards his appreciation of her society. She was clever. No doubt of that. In a few short interviews she had discovered the real Toddie — or we might say, the future Toddie — a personage, mark you, compact of solid and admirable qualities, hitherto unappreciated. To know that we are admired is an incentive to us to show ourselves at our best. And — O strange anomaly of the human heart — is not the flattery that credits us with virtues foreign to our natures, more silver-sounding than any recognition of the merits to which we can honestly lay claim?

Toddie, then, was at his best. Mounted upon his favorite hobby-horse, never before had he galloped so gaily in conversation. He reminded himself of the Major at *his best* — and for the first time in his life saw no presumption in the comparison. Pearls of inestimable value fell from his lips. He betrayed a knowledge of life, a profundity of observation wholly unsuspected. His remarks upon the folly of those who "walked oot" were both pungent and

caustic. His tirade against matrimony was calculated to damp the ardor of the most burning of bridegrooms. And as for his condemnation of that crowning absurdity called "love"— well, it was more than sufficient to make Venus weep and induce Cupid to break his arrows in despair.

Devina listened and acquiesced. "Aye, that's what I tell Jessie."—"Just so, keepin' company is awful silly."—"D'ye think that? That's the way I looks at it maself."—"Ma word, I just wish Miss Charity could hear ye."

These and kindred observations were as fuel to his fire.

And all the while, intent only on convincing her of the imbecility — nay, the non-existence of love, he edged nearer, laid the point of a confidential and explanatory forefinger on her knee, gazed earnestly into her face, sunned himself in the approving light of her eyes, drank the cup of her intoxicating presence, and read in her looks, in her attention, the manifest and unmistakable evidence of a dawning appreciation that equaled his own.

Then — alas that there should be a "then," for in this case it is as tantalizing as an "if," as postponing as a "but"— Bob spoiled it all.

That unaccountable animal had for some time shown signs of uneasiness. One might have supposed that, in common gratitude for his share of

Toddie's coat, he would have lent an approving ear to sentiments so deserving of respect. But no. Not at all. The conversation might have been carried on entirely in Greek for all the notice he took of it. His mind was plainly engrossed with mundane matters! Time and again in the middle of an improving sentence he had whimpered and scratched, looking with anxious eyes alternately from the sea to his master's face. In vain had he been commanded to "Lie doon," and to "Stop yer botherin'." He had but redoubled his exertions.

All at once his pantomime had the desired effect. Toddie's curiosity was aroused. He observed Bob closely. Then, his eyes too rested on the sea.

"Ma. God!" he cried, and started to his feet.

At any other time the ejaculation would have elicited Devina's stern condemnation, but something in her companion's face drove the profanity from her memory.

"What is it?" she cried in alarm.

"That!" And he pointed.

Slowly and insidiously, while they had been engrossed with each other, the tide had risen. Rocks that upon their arrival had been a good three feet above water were now submerged. There was something menacing in this stealthy encroachment. It endowed the sea with life and a purpose; as though it were a wild animal licking and growling, feigning

gentleness and amiability, but in reality creeping nearer and ever nearer before it sprang and destroyed. The mist, too, was upon them. Seen through its mysterious folds, the water gleamed wickedly.

"Come on," cried Toddie; and, seizing her by the arm, he dragged her to her feet.

As they hastily retraced their steps, scrambling up and down the slippery boulders, he explained in a few words the cause of his alarm. He reminded her of a gap in the reef. It had been dry sand when they had traversed it some half an hour before. It would be under water now.

Again and again he cursed himself for his stupidity. It was all his fault. What had possessed him? How could he have forgotten the tide? It was "daft-like"— inexcusable.

Devina never spoke. This unexpected call upon her courage found her prepared. Accepting his assistance, in silence, and with a grave and preoccupied look upon her face, she followed him closely.

Reaching the limit of the reef, they found Toddie's fears realized. An expanse of some twenty yards of water, momentarily deepening, now separated them from the parallel reef that would have led them dry-shod to the land.

"We 'll have to wade," said Devina resolutely.

"Wade!" cried Toddie in scorn. "It 's up to yer waist!"

The gravity on her face deepened.

"Is there no ither way?"

"Aye, bide here. The reef narrows up yonder. I'll see."

He hastened from her.

Devina stood on the edge watching the water that gushed and gurgled at her feet. Its little busy ways among the boulders had now a strange evil fascination for her, for did not her position endow it with a new and sinister significance? It was full of feigned flights and sudden rallies, of dying laps and gurgles, of hollow murmurs and explosions, of sighs and protests, of treacherous pauses, of swift advances, of mournful and unwearying agitation.

As she watched, it crept higher, receded, crept higher again. It would soon cover the rock upon which she was standing. Its apparent indecision was full of deception, for was it not a part of a vast concerted and onward movement inevitable as fate, inexorable as time? As she looked at it, her thoughts reverted to her father, and to how this purring, fawning creature had stifled the life out of his strong and vigorous manhood. A grim anger seized her.

Her thoughts, momentarily diverted, returned to Toddie. She had lost sight of him in the mist. She wondered at herself for not feeling alarm, and was forced to admit that had she been by herself she would not have faced the situation with a like

equanimity. It might well have been very eerie and very lonely waiting there, cut off from even the sight of the land by the damp-clinging vapor that drifted in from the Northern sea, and through whose impalpable folds the surrounding rocks loomed like phantoms, fading away into a mysterious nothingness, a gray and shifting obscurity. But Devina felt neither eerie nor lonely. She thought of Toddie.

His voice as he hastened towards her was inexpressibly welcome.

"It 's no good," he panted, breathless with the speed with which he had clambered over the rocks. "It 's narrower, but it 's a sight deeper. It 's just been a waste o' time, and the tide comin' in every single minute." He looked at her doubtfully, then inquired, "How are ye goin' to manage?"

"I 'll take off ma shoes and stockings."

"I doubt it 'll be too deep."

"I can try."

"Weel, be quick. We 've no time to lose."

But she hesitated.

"What is it now?" he cried testily.

Devina flushed. "Would ye mind lookin' the ither way?" Then when he had complied with her request: "You go first."

Toddie plunged into the water. Devina followed. Bob swam lustily. Around them the waves swirled

and eddied. As the chill of their touch met her naked limbs Devina shivered. Her stockings and shoes were suspended from her neck — both hands being fully occupied in holding her garments as high as possible. It needed but a moment however to convince her that her companion was right. The water was too deep to wade. Already a wave had drenched her from behind. In spite of her efforts she felt that it was impossible to reach the other side without damage to her clothes. Consternation fell upon her. In a flash she pictured her dripping and undignified progress through the streets of St. Andrews — the comments of the neighbors — the amusement and jeers of her fellow servants.

"Are ye all right?" cried Toddie.

There was no reply. Alarmed by the silence, and forgetful of his promise, he turned round in mid-passage, and to his horror and indignation beheld Devina mounting the rock she had so recently quitted.

"Hi!" he shouted. "Are ye mad? D' ye want to be drowned?"

"I 'm not comin'," she cried with decision, and suddenly aware of his eyes, let down her garments with a run.

Without a word he waded towards her. She watched his approach, a look of defiance in her eyes, but a feeling of alarm in her heart.

"What are ye goin' to do?" she faltered as he clambered up the rock.

"I 'm goin' to carry ye."

"I 'll — I 'll not let ye."

He looked her straight in the eyes, and her heart fluttered as she marked the determination in his face.

"See here," he said, and his voice though quiet was unexpectedly masterful. "None of yer nonsense. As ye won't walk, I 'm goin' to carry ye. Do as ye 're told. Get up."

Devina gasped. She gazed at the broad back lowered for her convenience, and an overpowering and novel sensation of weakness and dependence ran through her. She would have again refused, but something tied her tongue.

"Get up," commanded Toddie.

"I 'm awful heavy," she faltered as she obeyed. But, "Hold tight," was his only response.

Together they braved the waters — a small but victorious man, bearing on his back a large but vanquished woman.

The waves leapt around them, strove to reach Devina, sought to drag Toddie from his footing, but finding their efforts in vain, consoled themselves with chuckles of glee and ripples of merriment.

The sea is a consummate actress. In her time she has played many parts. On her lips there is laughter, and in her heart there are tears. Both are obedi-

ent to her command. Had circumstances permitted she would have drowned this man and woman. Balked of her prey she turned the episode into a jest and pelted them with foam. Only great actresses can thus turn their talents to suit the occasion. She seemed to be saying to herself: "If I cannot have tragedy, I will have comedy." So comedy it was.

CHAPTER XVI

"DINNA make such a noise," expostulated Toddie, starting from the drowsy after-effects of a Sunday dinner. But Bob would not take advice.

"Are ye there?" quavered a pathetic and obsequious voice through a crack in the door.

"Come in," said Toddie with cordiality. "Shut the door, for ony sake, the wind's like to freeze ye."

Bob's indignant bark had changed swiftly to a whine of pleased recognition, for Tam Macintyre was one of the favored few whom he considered worthy to approach his master.

"And what brings ye here the day, Tam?" yawned Toddie, stretching himself. The visitor's wistful eyes proclaimed the small but cheerful fire a sufficient excuse.

He was a pathetic figure, bowed with age, pinched with cold, grizzled, emaciated, hopeless, dressed in a threadbare overcoat of faded green, buttoned tightly round his skinny neck. His legs, bent at the knees, were concealed by baggy trousers many sizes too large, and so patched that the tailor, once responsible for their existence, would have blushed to recog-

nize them. A battered and antiquated cap that had evidently belonged to a nautical gentleman, and boots clamoring for the cobbler, completed his costume.

As he stood in the middle of Toddie's room his teeth chattered.

"Ye 're just perishin'!" cried Toddie. "Here, sit in to the fire." With rough kindness he forced his guest into the one armchair, while he seated himself on a three-legged stool. The old man, still trembling, stretched his benumbed fingers to the blaze.

"Had ye a round yesterday?" questioned Toddie, frowning thoughtfully.

Tam shook his head.

"Or the day before?"

"One," mumbled Tam, intent on enjoying the fire.

Toddie snorted. "That 's a shillin' and saxpence in two days?"

"Aye, just that."

"Ma word! that 's not enough to keep body and soul thegither."

"An' pay the rent —" broke in Tam, waking up and speaking with quavering earnestness. "Dinna forget that. If it wasna for you —"

"Hoots, man, never speak o' that."

"But I *will* speak o' it. You 've been a good friend to me, mony 's the time, and I 'll never forget it, but —" and he heaved a sigh —"it 's like a crumb

to a famishin' stomach, ye may say. What are ye about? "

Toddie had sprung to his feet, and was opening a cupboard.

" I 'm hungry," he said. " I 'm just lookin' to see what 's left. Aye. Here 's a cheese, and a loaf, and a bonnie bit o' haddock, cold, but that doesna matter — and — and a bottle o' whusky. Will ye keep me company? "

As the inventory proceeded, Tam's mouth opened, and an expression all but wolfish glittered in his eyes.

The viands were placed on the table. Tam, encouraged thereto, and after faint demur, attacked them ravenously. For some time the noise of his performance was the only sound to be heard — but at length he raised his head.

" You 're not eatin'? " he remonstrated with full mouth.

" I felt awful like eatin'," apologized Toddie avoiding his eye, " but it 's clean gone from me. Bob, think shame o' yourself."

Tam looked at the culprit.

" That dog," continued Toddie, pointing indignantly, " would eat all day, aye, and all night, too, if ye gave him the chance. D 'ye hear? Under the table wi' ye."

Dragged thus into undesired publicity, Bob feigned obedience; but no sooner was his master's attention

diverted, than there he was again, shamelessly watching every mouthful on its passage from the plate to Tam's lips with a breathless absorption, not without hope.

"You 're not drinkin'," exclaimed Tam with still greater astonishment.

"No."

"How 's that?"

"I wouldna touch it."

"Eh?"

"I say even if ye held that bottle to ma lips I wouldna touch a drop — I believe I 'd spit it oot. D' ye no' ken, Tammas Macintyre, that drink is the curse o' Scotland?"

"Guid sakes!"

"Aye, it takes the bread oot of wee bairns' mouths. It 's a fact, Tam; I have it on the best authority. Nae wonder yer flabbergasted. So was I. And here — that 's the last bottle o' whusky ye 'll see in this house, so that 's tellin' ye."

"Weel —" muttered Tam, after he had gaped at his host for a full minute. "Weel, if that 's so, it would be a peety no' tae make the most o' it." And with that his hand sought the neck of the bottle.

"How does it taste?" inquired Toddie with great interest.

"Fine," gasped Tam, for the raw spirit caused him to choke.

Toddie's eyes glistened. He looked at the bottle wistfully.

"Have a drop — go on," tempted his friend, pushing it towards him. But Toddie's hand, half outstretched, was resolutely withdrawn.

"No, I won't touch it — it 's clean again' her — I mean ma principles."

"Hoots! I canna think what 's wrong with ye. I canna understand what ye mean by 'cursin'' and 'takin' the bread frae bairns.' Maybe ye 're at parables again. I never hear ye swear, forby it 's a damn or twa that just slips oot accidental like. And as for mishandlin' wee bairns, that 's nonsense, for we all ken ye 're fond o' them. Na, na, Toddie, ye can take ma word for it, the drink 's a grand thing. It warms ye, aye, and it makes ye forget. Besides,"— he smiled insinuatingly, "is it no' recommended in the Bible?"

"Eh? In the Bible? Is that so?"

"Aye, is it. It says —'It 's a poor heart that never rejoiceth.' I canna mind who says it, maybe it was Solomon, but ye 'll find it there right enough."

"Ma word! Ye 're right. I mind the text. I wish I 'd thought o' sayin' that. She 's that partial to Screepture. Aye, aye, that changes the case all thegither. There can be nae harm in whusky if the Bible says that. Even she couldna verra weel find fault wi' Solomon. Ma word! I 'm awful glad ye

thought o' that, Tam. It shall never be said o' me that I 've a poor heart. Here 's to ye!"

After this reassuring conversation, the bottle circulated freely. The etiquette followed by both men was identical. Each wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, muttered the above-mentioned toast, put the bottle to his lips, threw back his head and swallowed with audible satisfaction. So devoutly did they perform this ceremony that an onlooker might have been excused for imagining them engaged in the performance of a solemn religious duty. It would have been noticeable, however, that the modest sips of Tam were put to shame by the doughty gulps of Toddie.

The former, as time went on, lost much of his habitual despondency; indeed the food, the drink, and the warmth worked an unexpected transformation upon this poor old derelict of the links. A pipe loaded with his host's tobacco added a finishing touch to the pleasant metamorphosis.

"Ye 're real cozy here, quite grand," he commended wistfully, but without envy, casting his eyes around. Then with an appreciative sniff: "And what a comfortin' smell."

A faint odor of fruit and vegetables pervaded the little room, for next door Wilson, the greengrocer, stored his stock-in-trade. The untidiness, the disorder, the atmosphere of poverty and lack of cleanliness, all were overlooked, or rather all, seen redly in

the flickering light of the fire, as through an atmosphere of *couleur de rose*, elicited nothing but Tam's heart-felt admiration.

"Oh, aye," agreed Toddie, puffing placidly, "you 're right. It 's comfortin'. If ye canna afford to buy apples, it does ye good to smell them."

"It 's bein' engaged by the month does it," mused Tam, eyeing the wreck of the cheese regretfully. "No, I canna eat ony more — But as I was sayin'—"

And with an expression of unusual contentment he descanted long upon the joys of regular employment. "*Me?*" he cried incredulously in answer to a suggestion of his host —"me be engaged by the month! —" He puffed feverishly. Then turning to Toddie, his eyes full of trouble, continued: "That will never be. Not only that, but I 'm losing the very gentlemen I 've carried for for years. Oh, ye needna deny it, it 's God's truth. I canna think what 's the matter. Things is awful changed, I see that. St. Andrews is no' the place it was. I 'm a good caddie, none better. What did Mr. Stott mean by sayin' to Braid —'I won't take Tam'? Oh, I heard him weel enough, though some folks pretends I 'm deaf. Toddie, you 've been in the same match with me, mony 's the time; have ye ever known me not able to do ma duty? *Have* ye, I say, *have* ye?"

He had gripped Toddie's arm. His voice rose at

the last insistent words into a quaver of senile and impotent indignation.

"No, Tam," soothed Toddie. "No, no."

The denial fell naturally from his lips, but the memory of Tam failing fast came to his mind — of Tam shambling after his employer; weighed down by the heavy bag; unable to keep pace with the match; feverishly, painfully anxious to give satisfaction, but plainly haunted by fear — the fear lest others should discover what he himself realized only too well.

"You 're not drinkin', Tam," he cried with rough feeling.

But Tam shook his head. With dull eyes fixed on the fire he had suddenly forgotten his surroundings, forgotten even his pipe. His lips moved inaudibly. As he sat there, huddled up, incongruously small in the large armchair, he appeared to have become but the faintly animated soul of the faded green coat, as threadbare, as reminiscent of the past, as incompetent to cope with the exigencies of the present.

Toddie looked at him for some time in silence, then dolefully shaking his head, reapplied himself to the bottle.

All at once Tam roused himself; or to speak more accurately, he was roused by Bob, for the tender-hearted animal intuitively scenting trouble, sought to insert a cold and wet nose between the palm of Tam's left hand and the leg of Tam's disreputable trousers.

Recalled thus sympathetically to the present, and secretly ashamed of having betrayed emotion, Tam began to discourse on various topics connected with the links. But whether he touched upon the decay of appreciative employers, or the weight of modern golf-bags, or the growing number of lady players, one felt that in every subject there lurked a grievance. The last mentioned roused his mild indignation.

"Did ye ever see onythin' like it!" he cried. "They 're as bad as trippers; that mony o' them carries for themselves. I canna see the use o' women, can you, Toddie?"

Toddie grunted inarticulately.

"No doubt the Lorrd knew fine what He was about when He made them," mused Tam, divided between his anxiety to honor the schemes of his Creator and his anxiety to pander to the well-known prejudices of his host, "but I canna help thinkin' that if He could only ha' foreseen whit the gentlemen call the congestion o' the links He wouldna have been in sich a hurry. Oh, aye, women are awful useless bodies, that 's a fact."

"Not all," blurted Toddie, somewhat thickly.

Tam stared.

"Not all," reiterated Toddie, solemnly frowning at the black bottle, and speaking with an air of labored impartiality. "I know one that ye just darena call useless. And more nor that, she knows her place.

Ye never see her on the links. Ye feel bound to respect her. Oh, there 's good in her, though it would bother the likes o' you to find it out."

"How did *you* find it out?" asked Tam respectfully, though still suffering from amazement.

"I believe it was through Bob," said Toddie simply. "Ye may have noticed that Bob 's no' easy deceived. He reads the heart. He never makes a mistake. He came straight to me when he came to St. Andrews. And more — he likes you."

Tam's hand found Bob's head in involuntary approval, but he continued to gaze at his friend with a not unnatural amazement. Toddie's eyes never wandered from the bottle. Slowly and apparently involuntarily, like one mesmerized, he reached out a hand, raised the temptation to his lips, then set it down with a deep sigh of satisfaction.

"Aye," he went on, speaking more and more thickly, "Bob liked her from the first. She 's the sort o' woman to please a dog. Ye canna deny it. Firm, too. A sort of rock o' ages. In trouble, aye, or in danger ye never hear her squeal. Oh, no!"

He gazed abstractedly at the fire, grunted tenderly once or twice, then, looking up, inquired: "Have ye ever carried a woman, Tam?"

"Carried! A woman!"

"That 's what I said."

Tam scratched his chin — his bleared eyes seemed to be gazing into the past.

"I believe I carried ma wife when she was ill."

"Far?"

"Eh?"

"I said far. Did ye carry her far?"

"Na, it wasna that far. Just from the chair to the bed."

Toddie cried out with scorn. "From the chair to the bed? What's that? A couple of yards, maybe. Hoots! ye had nae time to feel her weight. Man!—" he turned reproachful eyes on the amazed Tam, "I wonder to hear ye boastin' aboot a think like that! And a sick woman, too — nae doot she hadna the strength to refuse ye."

"She didna wish to refuse me. She was awful pleased."

"Pleased? Was she?"

"Aye, was she, I mind her whisperin'—'Thank ye, dearie.'"

Toddie's face fell, then became hopeful.

"Did she near strangle ye?" he asked eagerly.

"No fear!"

"What? Did she no' get on yer back?"

"On ma back! Na, that's no way to carry a woman."

"It is. It's the only way. Hoots, ye treated her like a bairn. Oh, I'm no' findin' fault wi' you,

Tam. Ye did yer best, but take ma advice the next time ye carry a woman just you make her get on yer back. It 's safer. Ye see where yer goin', aye, step by step, wi' the water swirlin' round yer legs —" He stopped short, put upon his guard by the stupefaction in his friend's face, then suddenly transfixing Tam with an inflamed and indignant eye: "And what business is it o' yours, Tammas Macintyre, to come here pryin' into oor secrets."

This onslaught was delivered so unexpectedly, and the imputations it conveyed were moreover so unmerited, that poor Tam could only gape; then, his eyes straying to the bottle, he nodded with gentle and sympathetic enlightenment.

"Aye, aye," he murmured leniently, "I 'm no' surprised, but I 'm sorry to hear ye say that — aye, and you 'll be sorry, too, when ye 're more yerself."

He stopped in a fresh access of astonishment, for Toddie, in the very act of wiping his nose on his sleeve, had suddenly paused, his thoughts visibly elsewhere, then slowly and as one acting under compulsion, had made use of a venerable duster.

"I 've never seen you do that before," exclaimed Tam, watching the performance with unfeigned interest. But Toddie, looking extremely sheepish, affected not to hear.

"Drink has queer effects on a man," marveled Tam partly to himself.

Toddie glared. "You think I 'm drunk?" he demanded.

"I wouldna go so far as to say that."

"Cause why? Cause you 're afraid. You 'll not find me afraid. I 'm afraid of nobody. If ye 're wantin' to fight —"

"No, no," protested Tam hastily.

"Weel, then, dinna sit there contradictin' me, for I 'll no' stand it. I canna abide women, ye know that weel enough. I 'm no' ashamed o' ma opeenions; but it doesna become a man to be obstinate. Na, na. As you was sayin', we 're all the work o' God's hands, men and women alike; and I canna doubt He felt a sort o' pride when He made her. If you 're ma friend, you 'll swear to that."

"I 'll swear to onythin' ye like, Toddie; but who is she?"

Partially mollified, Toddie gazed at his guest with an air of profound mystery: then rose unsteadily to his feet.

"I 'll let ye into the secret," he hiccoughed confidentially, steadying himself with the aid of the table. "She 's — she 's a woman."

"Hoots, I could ha' told —"

"A woman o' principles I mean," continued Toddie. "I respect her. She respects me. We both respects each other. We stand firm. D 'ye see?"

Rashly withdrawing his hand in order to empha-

size this statement, he came perilously near to falling, but recovering his equilibrium with an effort, he drew himself up, gazed with maudlin and defiant dignity at the spectator, then turning, made a swift and successful descent upon the bed.

A whine of eloquent disappointment rose from under the table.

"Guid sakes!" ejaculated Toddie's voice from the interior of the recess. "Bob, ma man, I forgot ye. I'm no better nor a selfish beast. Tam, are ye still there?"

"Aye, Toddie."

"Will ye give Bob a run? He'll go with ye if I tell him. I'm that sleepy. Thank ye, Tam. Bob loves ye like a brither. Goo' night."

"Come on, Bob," said Tam.

CHAPTER XVII

FOR the matter of a quarter of an hour there was silence in the little room. The Scottish Sabbath lay heavy on the gray town, hedging it about with an almost tangible atmosphere of pious depression. It lay like a pall also upon the spirits. This seventh day struck one as being composed of different stuff from other days — so powerful is the influence of mind over matter — as though it had voluntarily cut itself off from their society, like a pious sheep isolating itself from six ungodly goats.

Even the church bells, that were wont to ring out so merrily for a wedding, seemed to have caught the infection, for their voices, heard faintly in Toddie's room, tolled an invitation as lugubrious as though they were inviting that unregenerate slumberer to rise and attend his own funeral.

But Toddie was beyond their influence, far away in a land of dreams. Kindly sleep that unseals for rich and poor alike the limitless storehouse of the desires, had transported him to an enchanted region, a better land, or rather a better links, where caddies ceased from carrying, and bachelors were at rest.

All at once, with a start, Toddie woke up.

For a moment he lay gazing vacantly at the roof of the box-bed, unable to locate his surroundings, and equally unable to decide whether it was time for breakfast or for supper. Then, the noise that had awakened him being repeated, and resolving itself into a sharp knock at the door, he muttered to himself: "It 's one o' the neighbors, he 'll go away if I dinna let on I 'm here."

In pursuance of these tactics he lay silent; but it appeared that the visitor — whoever he might be — was uncommonly tenacious of his purpose; for, as Toddie lay listening, he heard the sharp click of the latch, the door opened, then closed, and, finally, a firm step resounded on the stone floor.

With feelings of considerable annoyance the master of the house contrived to turn upon his side so that he might peep between the bed-curtains. But no sooner had he done so than all breath was driven from his body. For there, large, imposing and black, stood Devina.

Fully awake now, Toddie stared at her, a prey to petrifaction as rigid as though her handsome head had possessed all the horrid qualities of Medusa. And to gauge fully the depth and the height of Toddie's incredulity, it must be remembered that for years no foot of mortal woman had dared to desecrate the sanctity of this his virgin citadel. The fumes of

whisky added not a little to the marvel of her appearance, for she trembled in a haze of troubled instability, slowly undulating in a species of mystic shadow-dance wherein not only she, but the walls, the floor, the ceiling, and every single article of furniture, took part.

The situation was sufficiently alarming. Bob had deserted him. He was poignantly aware of being taken unawares — of looking and feeling at his worst.

At this his conscience smote him. It was all very well to send it to sleep with Scriptural texts in Devina's absence, but in her presence no such course was possible. Nothing but the truth could live when confronted by these eyes, calm, clear, and inexorable as the truth itself. And, alas, the truth in this case was very ugly! It bore stern witness against him. He was drunk. He knew it. Everything revolved. He doubted if he could even stand. The situation was terrible.

She would think less of him. Less? That was a mild word. He was prepared to bet a penny that she would despise him. At that he squirmed internally. Why should he care what this woman thought of him? It was queer, but — but he did. He could disguise it from himself no longer. Her good opinion was very precious in his eyes.

No doubt he had been — well — premature. He had posed as sober. He had smilingly accepted her

praise. He had felt pleased, and flattered, and happy under a halo to which he could not truthfully lay claim. It was all Tam's fault — aye, and Solomon's. What right had they to come tempting an honest caddie? And that Tam had not only beguiled him from the path of virtue, but had sneaked away in the hour of danger, leaving his victim to face the consequences. Tam was a coward. Yes, Tam alone was to blame. But would Devina understand that? He doubted it.

Long as this painful reverie takes to record, it passed with rapidity through the bemused mind of Toddie as he lay there quaking with apprehension and guilt. One idea — the instinct of self-preservation — dominated all others, for he realized with what little clarity was left to him that his one hope of safety lay in absolute silence and immobility.

Swiftly she strode to and fro. "What the deevil is she up to now?" thought Toddie, then with alarm, "Ma word, if she 's no' tryin' to clean ma verra room." It was true. Devina, after a moment of hesitation, was working with method and celerity, her jacket discarded, her arms bare to the elbow. At her touch order sprang from disorder. Toddie could hear her occasional grunt of disgust when she chanced upon some ancient accumulation of rubbish, or some unwashed garment poked behind the dresser for safety. He suppressed a groan. Reaching the

grandfather's clock she paused, broom in hand, to inspect a "comic cut" which its owner had pinned to its venerable frame. In another moment the work of art had joined the collection on the floor. Nor is this the only indignity that Toddie had to suffer. There was worse to come. His socks — his Sunday socks, mark you, of a quality so superior that it would have been the height of extravagance to have subjected them to the wear and tear of the wash-tub, were removed *with the tongs!*

Nearer and nearer she came. If Toddie had dared to stretch out a hand he could have touched her. All at once she paused, straightened her hat, gnawed at her underlip, gazed thoughtfully at the bed. Toddie ceased to breathe. Then, suddenly, there was a swift forward movement, the curtains were torn aside — and all was over.

To do Devina justice, she was the more taken aback of the two. With a loud ejaculation she recoiled at least a yard. But Toddie, cowering low, gave no sign.

"You 're there," she cried.

He acquiesced with extreme reluctance.

"What are ye doin' in yer bed at this time o' day? Are ye ailin'?"

A glimmer of hope flashed upon the situation, but alas, Toddie vowed once more to compromising veracity extinguished it at once.

"No," he muttered, "I canna say I'm exactly ailin'. Yet —" he added hopefully, "ma legs feels queer."

In spite of his strenuous efforts to enunciate with distinctness, his speech betrayed him. Suspicion awoke in Devina's mind. But too sadly conversant with the symptoms of intoxication — had not her life with her father been one long, unavailing struggle to cure him of the vice? — she recognized them all in the helpless figure outstretched before her. Her gorge rose in disgust.

"You 're drunk!" she cried.

"Dinna!" protested Toddie earnestly, jerking himself to a sitting posture and stretching out a hand. "Dinna say that, it 's — it 's only that I wasna expectin' visitors."

She stood in the middle of the floor gazing at him with stern and irrevocable condemnation, her head flung back, her bosom slightly heaving, her hands still grasping the broom handle, while around her the dust clouds settled slowly. She felt that her mind was made up at once and forever. And truth to tell, it was no delectable object that quailed before her gaze, for drink and neglect of his person were writ large in untidy hair, flushed face, bloodshot eyes, unshaven chin, even in the high water mark that encircled his collarless neck, and in his trembling and outstretched hand.

"I wouldna have come," she said in a low forced voice that vibrated with remorse, "but I wanted you to know that that Major o' yours is comin' to his tea again to-day. That man Herd told me ye lived here. I canna think what made me come." She broke off, visibly overwhelmed with self-reproachful amazement. "I thought I 'd find a decent, sober, God-fearin' man who, if he doesna attend the Kirk, knows at least how to honor the Sabbath in his own house. I 've been deceived, but I 'll not be taken in a second time. Is this the way ye read your Bible? Is this your pretended piety? Is this your hatred of drink!" Her gesture enveloped Toddie with a wave of unspeakable scorn. "Shuttin' yourself up alone and drinkin' yourself drunk in yer bed. Shame on ye! Ma father whiles came home drunk, an' a sair affliction it was. But he was tempted by them that should have known better. There was some excuse for him. He was just a bairn, and couldna say no. But you —" Again Toddie shrank, and again the denunciatory finger nailed him to the pillory of the box-bed — "*You!* There 's no excuse for you. None!"

The torrent of her reprobation broke over him as an irresistible surge might break over the head of a swimmer. It took his breath away. His muddled brain was in no condition to frame excuses. He had indeed a trembling idea about quoting Solomon in

self-defense, but his agitation was so extreme that he could not remember the words. Moreover, he vaguely felt that in this case at all events the quotation was on the face of it inexact, and that drink could not be said to have made the heart of man rejoice. No, as he had not only made, but taken to his bed, so must he lie in it, until this terrible ordeal was over.

There was that in Devina's manner that suggested more than her words conveyed. In the tone of her voice — and more particularly when she referred to her anticipation of finding him honoring the Sabbath — there had sounded a note of disappointment that might almost have been called personal, had not its expression been so unconscious as to elude self-knowledge. It seemed as though something too formless, too undefined for speech and almost for thought had sprung suddenly into being, realized its futility, and burst into bitterness, becoming as it were a lash wherewith she scourged not only the cause of her delusion, but also, and with still greater severity, her deluded self.

It was worse than he had feared — far worse. His most secret apprehension had come to pass. She despised him.

Bewildered, smarting, helpless, he stared up into

her stern countenance, his mouth twitching, his bloodshot eyes suffused with involuntary tears.

The silence that ensued was of long duration. Faint sounds stole from the street to the room, unheeded by either occupant. The light that struggled in through the dirty little window was momentarily becoming less. It dimly showed Toddie's face, white and drawn, and Devina's dark and motionless figure. The gathering dusk weighted with the sadness that attends the death of each short-lived winter's day, seemed the material counterpart of the depression that lay heavy upon these strangely assorted friends.

Devina's mind no less than Toddie's was in a turmoil. She asked herself questions to which there seemed no satisfactory answers. She had said her say, why did she not go? What kept her standing here in this man's room? Of one thing she was distressfully aware — his silence filled her with compunction. She had nerved herself for vociferous vindication, for maudlin anger, even for drunken abuse. Had these come she would have met them with the contempt they would have merited.

But this continued silence took her aback. In it, and in his appearance, there was something tremulous, pathetic. It made her feel as though he were a child, or a dumb animal smitten undeservedly.

The justice of her cause seemed to avail her noth-

ing. It was almost as if she, and not he, were to blame. This unforeseen, and indeed unmerited, turning of the tables galled her. Still actuated by disgust, she hardened her heart against compassion. He deserved all she had said and more. She tried to persuade herself that his very silence and tearfulness was a pose, an attempt to put her in the wrong. And though she did not quite succeed in believing this, yet the mere suggestion strengthened her in her resolve to " stand no nonsense." Rousing herself with an effort, she again spoke to him.

Toddie, listening to the deep voice, striving to distinguish the dark figure that blurred and became one with the surrounding gloom, painfully seeking to understand, followed the drift of her meaning rather than her actual words.

It appeared that his conduct had confirmed the unfavorable opinions she cherished towards men — that he was a drunken ne'er-do-weel — that his room was little better than a pigsty, and his habits and person a disgrace to the Scottish nation — that no self-respecting woman would demean herself by associating with him — and that finally as she, Devina, saw no hope of his amending his ways, all question of further partnership was at an end.

Her voice still vibrated dreadfully in his ears — his heart still sank to great and greater depths of despondency, but it was not till he heard the sound

of the closing door that Toddie realized that she had left him in anger. And even then he could not quite credit her departure, but lay silent and apprehensive, half expecting her to return to the attack.

But the silence that followed was profound. It seemed strange and unnatural, weighted with indescribable fatality. Beneath it Toddie lay engulfed as a drowned man might lie buried forever in the irreclaimable depths of the sea.

No animosity towards his departed guest found place in his thoughts. He still admired her. If possible, he respected her even more. Her moral character seemed to soar above him, unattainable, incomprehensible. But for the mere fact of its existence he could at all events feel grateful. It was he himself who had fallen in his estimation; and as he looked upon the picture so ruthlessly painted by Devina, and saw himself for the first time in glaring and objectionable colors, a hearty contempt for the man he had been, mingled with lively remorse, and a longing to be better.

This latter impulse was altogether undisciplined — it was a startling and novel idea — it was forced to justify its existence by combating a lifetime of easy-going indifference as regards all moral progression whatsoever. But the desire to do something worthy of Devina's friendship was in itself the best antidote to the discouragement and self-dissatisfac-

tion that overwhelmed him. But what could he do? Pressing his hands to his burning head, he tried to think.

All at once he rolled from his bed and essayed to stand. To his astonishment he found he could do so quite easily. Intoxication had fled.

As he stood there in the gathering dusk he was conscious of unusual gravity, and as though he were face to face with some important crisis, not to be set aside. The unfamiliar aspect of his room added to his solemnity. It was uncannily tidy, with a neatness and order not of this life.

Scarcely aware of the act, he touched the duster of which Devina had made use, touched it fearfully, yet reverently, as though within its folds there still lurked some memory of the woman who despised him.

For long he stood there, the duster in his hands, plunged in thought. Then, suddenly, as one who makes up his mind, he turned to the cupboard in the wall and took therefrom a bottle. As his fingers closed round its neck, the cool familiar contact, eloquent of rosy and Bacchanalian hours — who shall say how many — attempted to shake his resolution. But the time had gone for such weakness. With a jerk of his head he marched resolutely to the fireplace, and poured the entire contents upon the ashes.

CHAPTER XVIII

TO converse with a dog is oftentimes more satisfactory than to converse with a human being. It is to enjoy all the freedom of solitude, yet not be deprived of the comfort of companionship. It is to unbosom the heart of those feelings that lie closest to it — to be sad or gay, practical or sentimental, childish or grown-up as the mood sways us, without fear of censure or ridicule. It is to find always the same faithful friend, one who will neither argue nor contradict, a silent listener, a ready sympathizer. It is never to be disappointed.

Under such golden conditions what wonder that the natural man peeps out, throws off all disguise, all reticence, all self-consciousness, reveals the texture of his secret thoughts, the very fabric of his inmost soul?

Such friends meet midway in the mind's infinity, between the dog-star and the human planet, in some happy enchanted sphere of mutual love and comprehension. For a while the dog discards his dogdom, and the man his humanity. The former condescends to be almost a man, the latter succeeds in becoming

nearly a dog. Sympathy, that divine knitter of kindred souls, touches them with her wand. The man, forgetful of the devious contortions of civilized speech, becomes simple, sincere, transparent — virtues derived without a doubt from the noble and inarticulate soul of his companion — while the dog, for his part, lending himself generously to the occasion, condones a world of unnecessary and, to him, incomprehensible sound for the sake of the kindness from which it springs.

Show me the man who can talk to his dog, and I will show you a good fellow. Not one who flings him a hasty word — of which it were well if both were ignorant — a peremptory command, or even a lukewarm endearment. These will never plead for him at the bar of that silent judge. Not one who throws him the bone of an idea from which he himself has devoured the meat — but one who offers this partner of his joys and sorrows a conversational cut from the juiciest portion of the intellectual roast.

Few men can talk to their dogs. Toddie was one of the number. His conversations with Bob were long and intimate. They sounded the whole gamut of ideas of which Toddie was capable. Into that attentive ear he had poured more confidences than ever were listened to by the connubial pillow. If ever a dog were deeply learned in his master's mind, it was Bob. From the study of sheep to the study of hu-

manity is not such a far cry as might be supposed. The qualities which Bob had acquired stood him in good stead. He brought to his new task a keenness of observation, a leniency, and above all a patience rare even among the best of shepherds. Nothing is ever wasted. Even his tenderness towards newly-born lambs was transferred whole-heartedly to Toddie.

As for our hero, he was convinced that Bob understood, if not the precise meaning, at all events the drift of every word he uttered. His explanation to Tam of the doctrine of love was not so metaphoric as they both had surmised. It literally warmed him to pour out his soul before his shaggy comforter, to look down and behold the bright eyes instinct with intelligence and devotion, to note the ragged ears cocked to an angle of flattering attention, to hear the tender thud of the tail upon the floor. Under these influences he sometimes taxed the good-nature of Bob far beyond the limits of friendship. Thus, upon the day when he had discovered the Major, Bob was compelled to witness, if not actually to take part in, an orgy distressing to one by nature addicted to water; and on the night succeeding the intrusion of Devina, Bob was held forcibly in conversation long after the hour at which he was usually at liberty to seek his bed. From which the reader will infer that even friendship is not without its drawbacks.

Now, I defy you to live on terms of intimacy with a fellow being and not become instantly aware of a change in their mental outlook. The most insignificant thought, the most trivial action, spreads its consequences like a stone thrown into water; how much more noticeable then a revolution of the soul, a moral earthquake that overthrows all familiar landmarks? Bob, who, had he consented to betray his master's secrets — a treachery of which we know well he was incapable — could have told you from the mere sound of the beloved footsteps whether or no Toddie had paid a visit to the public, was not likely to remain in ignorance of a misfortune that changed his master in the wag of a tail from a joyous, happy-go-lucky, devil-may-care, wine-bibbing little caddie into as brooding, melancholy, and sober a man as ever carried a golf-bag round the links of St. Andrews.

Even had he not been taken into Toddie's confidence — as already related — upon the memorable occasion of Devina's visit — though if the truth were known he had been so overcome with sleep during that interminable soliloquy that he could not afterwards remember a single word — there were yet a thousand signs of regeneration to open his eyes. Whether or no he attributed the calamitous change directly to Devina is a matter of conjecture. He himself, with the exquisite tact that was one of his most chivalrous qualities, never breathed a syllable upon the subject

— never even gave Toddie occasion to suspect that he linked his name with that of a woman. A human confidant would have ejaculated triumphantly, "I told you so." Bob merely yawned. The former might possibly have laughed. Bob did not even smile. The man might have resented Toddie's fits of depression. The dog only saw in them a reason for redoubling his attentions, for creeping closer to Toddie's side, for thrusting his nose with greater frequency into Toddie's apathetic hand.

O Dogs, angels in canine form, from what heavenly land do ye come to bear with our infirmities, to comfort and console!

But, while preserving his habitual unclouded demeanor, deep in his honest heart Bob was anxious. From his own particular corner by the fire he watched Toddie's every movement with a very natural and affectionate apprehension. Not that he deduced melancholia from sobriety — that was beyond him, but he vaguely felt that something was wrong. He missed the old hilarity, so characteristic of his master, he missed, too, the brightening, if unsteady eye, he mourned the jovial, if inebriated voice. He missed more than these. One night he missed his dinner. Toddie, plunged in the chaos of his own distracting thoughts, had forgotten to feed either man or beast. There is a limit to all things. Bob decided that this was the limit. His vociferous reproaches awoke the

echoes of Logie's Lane, and brought down Toddie's wrath upon his innocent head. Of course they made it up directly, as became friends. Bob was forgiven for Toddie's oversight, and humbly testified his gratitude. The meal finished, they settled down into one of their usual postprandial chats.

"Bob," said Toddie, as that favored individual hopped lightly on to his knee with the assured air of one positive of welcome, "Bob, I do believe ye care for me."

Bob's whole body wriggled an affirmative.

Toddie tucked one arm round him, whereupon the dog, laying his rough head against his master's chest, looked up at him with an expression so sentimental that it would have prompted smiles did it not betray unalienable love and fidelity.

"Aye," muttered Toddie, "you 're not one to give a poor man the go-by. If I was to rob a kirk ye would think none the less of me, eh?"

This sacrilegious idea, far from scandalizing, left Bob totally unmoved.

"A dog 's a queer thing," grunted his master, comforted, and pulling the yellow ears gently; "drunk or sober, he 's ay yer friend. What d' ye get here, ye wee besom, to make ye like that? Shut up most o' the day, a bone for yer dinner, a sup o' parritch for yer tea, a bare board for yer bed. What 's that? Mony a poor body in jail has better. And

yet, there ye are, waggin' yer silly tail aff when ye see me come hame. Bob, Bob, that 's no' the way o' the world!"

He sighed, shook his head, then continued in tones of naïve and modest wonder:

"What can ye see in me? What is 't ye admire? It beats me. It canna be the ootside onyway. Naebody in their senses would call me bonnie — though between oorselves, Bob, I 've seen worse. What then? It must be the heart, as I telt Tam. Aye, ye look deep. Is that it? And what d' ye see there? Ye think I care for ye? Man, ye 're just a wee mass o' conceit frae yer impident nose to yer senseless tail!"

A pause, during which Bob and Toddie continued to gaze affectionately at each other.

"Ma word!" exclaimed the latter suddenly. "What 's this? Aye, gray hairs! I never noticed them before. Here — and here." He closely inspected the upturned muzzle, then patted the patient head. "Weel, weel, you and me just sit and watch each ither growin' auld, Bob, and mind the days lang syne when we was young. Aye, it comes tae us all, man or dog. But, hoots, what does it matter when we love each ither. It just draws us nearer. Ye feel that, eh? I was certain o' it. And yet —" his voice sank to a hoarse and confidential whisper —"I confess to you that when I see Tam shamblin' after

the gentlemen — me mindin' what like he was — says I to maself: 'That 'll be you, Toddie, in a matter o' twenty year.' Aye, it 's a fearsome thought, but you 'll be auld too and that 's a consolation. Here! Sit up till I get oot ma baccy."

His pipe in full blast, Toddie relapsed into a brown study. Bob winked lazily at the fire, then gradually closed his eyes. For some time there was silence in the little room, broken only by the ticking of the clock. Then, all at once, Bob was aroused from his light doze by feeling the broad chest against which his head was resting, rise and fall. Drowsily he cocked one ear. Again the phenomenon occurred. At this both ears rose simultaneously.

"Aye, aye," sighed Toddie. "All over."

So full of despondency was this remark that it shook the listener both physically and mentally. The voice continued:

"Never speak to me again. Oot of ma life. I never thought — I wish — I 'd give onything so I would. But —"

There ensued another lengthy pause, then Bob, listening anxiously, heard again his master's voice and, as much as a dog could, wondered at the sad and wistful pathos of its tones.

"If I 'd only kenned it before. But — I was blind. That bonnie day on the rocks — I never thought it at the time — but — I was happy. I see

it fine now. If she 'd only cared that woman could ha' done onything she liked with me! Just onything. It 's amazin'! I canna take ma thoughts aff her. That voice o' hers — aye, and that glint o' her een! I never imagined onything in the world could be sae bonnie. Ah, why canna it be all over again? Why? Why? If she could just come back the once. Ma God! I 'd make her see. But, what 's the use! She 's gone. She 'll never come back. It 's too late!"

His voice, scarcely raised above a whisper, struck a note of misery keen and personal. For the moment he had forgotten his listener — his surroundings — forgotten everything save Devina and that by his own fault he had lost her.

Bob, face to face with a sorrow he could not understand, whimpered softly. Toddie drew him closer.

"Wee mannie, ye feel for me. But ye canna help me. If ye could only speak now, ye 'd say a word for me. Ye 'd tell her I wasna all bad. I believe she 'd listen to you — she likes ye. And, here! — ye mustna judge her by what I told ye she said the ither night. She was upset, and no wonder. Ye see, Bob, there 's just women and women. Some on them drag a man doon — and ithers just lift him up. That 's her way, and man, it 's bonnie. Men are what women make o' them, I can see that now.

And me — I 've had nae chance. Ah, Bob, if ma mither had only been like her!"

Bob could no longer restrain himself. There he was on his hind legs on Toddie's knee, his nose whistling out of pure sympathy.

"Doon!" muttered his master. "Doon! — doon!"

But Bob was struggling to insert his head between the grimy muffler and the unwashed neck.

"I wonder ye care to touch me," cried Toddie in a burst of unwonted passion. "I 'm a disgrace. Them 's her words."

But sublimely indifferent to female prejudice, Bob was now engaged in licking enthusiastically.

"Ma word!" cried Toddie, struck with a bewildering idea. "If he 's no' tryin' to clean me hisself."

In sudden shame he regained his feet. Bob, abruptly dislodged, watched him with renewed anxiety. What was this? What meant this unusual pouring out of water, this application of soap? He had speedy cause to lament his attempt at consolation.

"Your turn," cried the metamorphosed Toddie, his face glowing — the result of unusual friction. "Come oot o' that. Ye needna hide."

Ten minutes later a wiser and a sadder dog, damp, depressed, and disconcertingly clean, sat at the fire and shivered.

CHAPTER XIX

TALL, statuesque, commanding, framed by the semi-drawn curtains, Devina stood motionless in the window of Charity's bedroom. A westerly gale was at its height, accentuating the sadness of vast and desolate spaces over which the wintry twilight had already fallen.

There was something elemental and even vaguely terrifying in the unfettered wind, in its loud violence, its mysterious viewlessness, its sudden irrational lulls, its swift and savage assaults. Something infinitely pathetic, infinitely mournful too in the writhing of the tormented earth — the trees wildly tossing their devastated branches, the very grass appearing to be shaken by convulsive and uncontrollable shudders.

The ragged and low-flying clouds swept the sky with their wings. They fled seawards — from the dying West, to the East already dead. Swiftly and without intermission they streamed, like the rout of an innumerable army. The earth was darkened by their passage.

They trailed their mournful shadows likewise over the face of the woman at the window, alternately obscuring and revealing the stern dark features that unconsciously claimed kindred with their gloom.

And not their material aspect only, but their spirit of lamentable and eternal unrest — the spirit that fled from the day to seek refuge in the night — seemed to creep close in this hour of premature darkness, close till it touched her life.

Her thoughts were sad — though her expression was less melancholy than perturbed — too sad for speech, thoughts that but a little while ago had forced her to close a window hastily upon the distant sound of a barrel-organ, betrayed into emotion, her eyes full of sudden and inexplicable tears. A sense of loss, a wistful and hopeless yearning, a tenderness deep, deep down, may feed upon a woman's heart every day, yet remain unsuspected, because unexpressed.

As she stood there, one hand upon the curtain-fringe, the blackness of her dress merging into the blackness of the shadowy room, but her face showing faintly white against the growing obscurity, her mind drifted hither and thither upon a sea of painful and agitated thought. The memory of two men held her an unwilling captive — two men — Archie and Toddie — the man she had loved, and the man she despised.

For some time they had obsessed her, though when mistress of her thoughts she drove them indignantly from her mind. With the insidiousness of persistent and unwelcome recollections they took advantage of her occupations, when her attention was engaged upon other matters, to create a vacuum which they alone could fill. Entirely without her consent, and almost entirely without her knowledge, the demon of thought busied itself with these two men, recalling their actions, words, looks, comparing them mentally and physically; brooding over the memory of the one — a something shameful, that must be buried — puzzling itself fruitlessly over the other — a something contemptible, not worth burying — racked by regrets, inflamed by scornful recollections, tormented by doubts and tremulous indecisions.

Waking therefrom, as from a vague yet troubling dream, Devina wondered at herself with an immense, an incredulous, and a sternly self-accusing amazement. What! She, Devina, to occupy herself with thoughts of men! A wave of burning self-reproach inundated her face. Her conscience convicted her of indelicacy, nay, more, of hypocrisy. Had she not that very morning poured the vials of her scorn over the head of the house-parlormaid, because, because, forsooth, that misguided and love-lorn maiden was discovered in the act of concealing a photograph within the bosom of her dress?

"Is that you, Devina?" exclaimed a voice.

"Yes, Miss Charity."

The girl approached the window, and standing by Devina's side looked outwards at the storm.

"How dark it 's getting," she said.

The sound of the sympathetic voice, with a certain resonant timber in it, the audible presentation of Charity's personality, soothed Devina. It stirred, as ever, to quicker and more conscious life the current of inarticulate devotion that flowed from her heart to her young mistress. To Devina this girl was more than a sweet and gracious presence — more even than an outlet for pent-up affection. She represented all that was good in an evil world.

The wind fell upon the house, screamed down the chimneys, beat as with insistent and passionate hands upon the windows, then, baffled at every point, was heard to bluster away into the darkness.

The two women listened, Charity uneasily, Devina with indifference.

"I hope no one is at sea to-night," said the former in a low voice.

"No one," referring presumably to creatures masculine, the latter snorted.

"What were you doing when I came in?" questioned Charity, after an interval.

"I was closin' up."

"Why don't you leave that to Jessie?"

"Jessie!" The memory of the photograph rankled afresh. "Her! A silly, useless, flighty thing. Do you think she goes round the house when it rains? No' likely! The ither day the water was just pourin' in at the bathroom window, and what do ye think I found her doin'? Carryin' on with the butcher. Her that 's engaged to the plumber — or ought to be," added Devina grimly.

Charity smiled.

"But you 'll spoil her if —"

"Spoil her? *Me* spoil her?" Devina gave vent to a short and mirthless laugh. "You wouldna have said that if ye could have heard me. She 'll no' waste the butcher's time again, I 'm thinkin'. His time 's meat. Spoil her? Hoots, she 's the one that does all the spoilin'. Did she not spoil the tap in the pantry? 'Makin' work for yer plumber?' says I. And what a way to take a friendly remark — cryin' like a big baby!"

"I wish you got on better with the others."

"I wish I did. But there 's some things I canna do, even to please you. It 's — it 's the way I 'm made. I canna stand their silliness. Aye, and their waste. What servants are comin' to, beats me. They take no pride in their work — only in their faces. Says Cook: 'Blue 's ma color.' Did ye ever hear the like o' that, Miss Charity."

Charity laughed.

"Aye, ye can laugh! Nae doot it's funny, though I canna see it. Thinkin' of her color with her dinner plates all dirty. Na, na, ye needna blame me for doin' their work, for I just canna help it. I ken other folks's duty, and please God, I 'll do it."

A silence ensued, broken only by the wind and the fitful patter of raindrops upon the streaming panes.

"There can have been no golf this afternoon," said Charity.

"No," assented Devina sourly.

Another silence, during which Devina struck with a sudden idea gazed with anxiety at her young mistress; but the growing dusk, like a kindly and concealing veil, shrouded Charity's features.

"She 's thinkin' o' that Major," thought Devina, longing yet fearing to question.

A feeling of impotence oppressed her — the impotence of one forgotten, of one who holds the body with loving and jealous eyes, but is powerless to enchain the heart.

"I wonder —"

"Aye."

There was a pause, during which Devina did not dare to move, much less to speak. It was as though she watched a bird, nearing her, unconscious of her presence.

"I wonder," continued the girl's voice, barely

audible in the windy dusk, "I wonder what it feels like to live alone."

"Umph! there would be naebody to bother ye."

"And no one to love you, Devina."

Silence.

"And the loneliness of it. Just think — to go out and come in every day, and no one to care, or to ask you if you 've enjoyed yourself." She paused, deep in thought, then suddenly: "Devina, we ought to try to make them happy."

"Guid sakes! who?"

"The people who live alone. We might ask them to tea."

Devina frowned heavily.

"Ye canna do that. It would be an awful expense. If ye asked all the lonely folk in St. Andrews to their tea ye would have to take the Town Hall."

For the moment the idea of such prodigal hospitality took Charity aback, but at the next she smiled.

"Charity begins at home."

Devina, vaguely scenting another joke, sniffed suspiciously.

"We might begin with Toddie and — and Major Dale."

The girl waited for a comment, but none came. The figure by her side — more than ever obscured

as the moments passed — listened to the suggestion in ominous silence.

"They both lead such lonely lives — and —"

"I dinna ken what ye 'd be after," burst out Devina, driven into desperation. "Is it not their ain fault if they 're lonesome? Could they no' keep house thegither like you and me? To hear ye talk, a body would think ye had never had that Major in before. Hoots, ye 're always askin' him to his tea."

"Major Dale," corrected Charity with dignity. "And you 're quite wrong. He comes without being asked."

"Weel, he canna be that lonely seein' that he 's always here; and as for that caddie o' his —"

She broke off. Her face flushed in the twilight.

"I thought you liked him? "

"Me! Like him!" There was swift scorn in the ejaculation — scorn fierce and tempestuous as the wind that fell at that moment upon the house — scorn out of all proportion to the innocent and kindly character of the interrogation.

Charity, listening in astonishment, and trying vainly to distinguish the face of her companion, seen vaguely as a somber silhouette, one with the surrounding shadows, realized that the cry betrayed a source of trouble of whose existence she had hitherto been unaware.

"Why not?" she asked, raising her voice to make herself audible, "I like him. I spoke to him that day I golfed with Major Dale. He seemed—" She paused, racking her brain for something that would redound to Toddie's credit, yet be not too remote from the truth. The quest presented difficulties, for the behavior of the scandalized Toddie on that occasion lent itself to no pleasant recollections.

"Aha!" cried Devina in gloomy triumph. "Ye see!—ye can say nothin' for him."

"Major Dale said he was the best caddie in St. Andrews."

A contemptuous snort.

"That 's something in his favor."

"Precious little. Ony eediot can carry a bag o' clubs—" She checked herself, then added with bitterness—"Aye, drunk or sober."

"I asked him—" continued Charity pleasantly, "how he liked having tea with you."

There came no comment, though the hand holding the curtain tightened. Charity continued: "He seemed quite touched, for he gave Major Dale the wrong club." She looked up at Devina, then added with complacency: "I asked him to come in again."

"You—you asked him to come in again!"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"I was sorry for him."

"Ye might have saved yerself the trouble. If that man comes to this house again never expect me to give him his tea."

"But — I thought it would please you — you never have visitors. I thought you liked him."

For a moment there came no answer; then out of the darkness Devina's voice was heard, deep, troubled — the voice of one inexpert in self-analysis, struggling to express the inarticulate.

"How can I — how can any decent woman, like a thing like yon? There was no talk o' likin'. It was just a — just a convenience. I never thought —. But there —" She drew herself up. "Ye canna touch pitch and escape defilement."

"Defilement?"

"Aye, defilement. Oh it 's easy seen, ma dearie, you ken nothin' aboot men, and may the Lorrd keep ye from the knowledge. Drunken, dirty, Sabbath-breakin'— so they are. I wouldna touch one o' them with a broom handle, not one."

"But — Toddie 's given up drinking."

Devina started.

"I say, he does n't drink any more. He refused a drink the other day — Major Dale told me so," and Charity narrated the incident with an ardor of championship that astonished even herself.

That the information took Devina completely by

surprise was plainly observable. But, as she pondered, an incredulous smile curled her lips: "He must have been sick," she said contemptuously.

Having drawn the curtains and lighted the gas, she remarked, one hand on the door:

"Now, I canna waste ma time. There 's that petticoat o' yours to mend."

"Well," said her mistress, "perhaps you 're right. If Toddie is as bad as that —"

"Bad? Who said he was bad?"

"You did."

"I said nothin' of the sort."

They faced each other under the light.

"Oh, Devina, you said he was dishonest and —"

"Dishonest! Me! I never said the word. I never questioned the man's honesty for a moment. That would be the last straw. He 's got wickedness withoot that. Dishonest! What next! Hoots, Miss Charity, I 'm surprised at ye! Would ye take away the man's character?"

Charity turned away to hide a smile.

CHAPTER XX

THE attack upon his own person and the ablution of Bob pledged Toddie to a course of conduct wider reaching by far than he had anticipated. Like a stone flung into the water, his action spread the waves of its consequences to the farthermost limit of his belongings. From Bob to the kitchen floor was an inevitable progression — likewise from his own face to his disreputable muffler. Cleanliness, like an infectious disease, spreads rapidly. Each day marked its progress. One article of furniture after another fell a victim. Not only would you have failed to recognize the room — but the room would have failed to recognize itself, so lustrous was it, so rubbed and scrubbed by the full force of Toddie's arm.

Many have been the great deeds, many the drastic revolutions inspired by the memory of a woman's eyes, but none, I dare swear, more worthy of record than this spring-cleaning, not only of Toddie's household goods, but of his very existence. Like his renunciation of whisky it was an offering laid on the lowest step of Devina's shrine, laid humbly, peni-

tently, with no hope of reward, no hope even of recognition. She would never come again — Toddie knew it, so what chance of her discovering that all this had been done for her? None at all. Yet Toddie persevered. Not for one moment did he hesitate. He spared nothing. Scrubbing-brush in hand he attacked the grandfather's clock with the same stoical impartiality, the same stern ardor of self-sacrifice with which he lathered the very shirt stripped from his own protesting back.

He was only a common little caddie, plain to look at: you, reader, would have passed him over had you seen him with the crowd of his associates round the shelter, and small blame to you, for there was nothing to distinguish him from mortals of less heroic soul — it needed a Bob to discover that — yet within that breast, covered by the amazingly clean shirt, the torch of chivalry blazed as brightly as in the heart of a Bayard.

It is certain that he himself had not the slightest conception of the significance of his actions. Once embarked upon the course he had planned, he rarely gave himself up to conscious thought. Thinking was an awful business, not to be lightly undertaken — deeds were much more in Toddie's line. As for self-analysis, he had never even heard of it, much less had he ever put it into practice. But something was undoubtedly at work within him. He felt it —

vaguely, glowingly, exultantly — yet with awe. Never before had he been so "warmed"— nor must this be attributed solely to the exercise. Though he knew it not, it was the fire of self-denial, of self-sacrifice, of devotion, of abnegation. Virtues that have emblazoned the glorious pages of history! They have transfigured the pallid countenances of saints, they have sustained the holy resolution of martyrs — and shall we then deny their presence in the rubicund face of Toddie, because, forsooth, he is only a caddie and lives in Logie's Lane? Most assuredly not.

There were times, however, when our hero paused, reaching as it were an oasis of contemplation in the midst of a desert of unthinking impulse. At such rare moments he would be seized with fresh amazement, not untinged with superstitious alarm — the alarm of a man confronted unexpectedly by an unfamiliar face in a mirror.

He — Toddie — doing this for a woman!

Overcome with incredulity he would remain for long motionless, on his knees, while the dust clouds settled slowly. Then, with a jerk of his head and an admonishing grunt he would strenuously resume his task.

Between ourselves, during this period of storm and stress Bob lived a dog's life. He was driven from pillar to post. When the fireplace became un-

tenable, he sought refuge beneath the bed — when the business end of the broom forced him to evacuate that sanctuary, he slunk away, treading gingerly on the wet floor and keeping as close as possible to the wall, till he reached the recess where ticked the grandfather's clock. There was just room for him between the case and the wall. From this asylum he watched Toddie with smarting and reproachful eyes — restrained, however, from active demonstrations by the memory of his one bath.

One night Toddie showed signs of more than usual restlessness. He could not keep still. He got on Bob's nerves. What sense was there in walking about when you could roast yourself at a fire! Thank heaven, there was nothing more that could be washed — that was some consolation. Bob — it must be explained — was feeling sore — both physically and mentally. He had concealed a favorite bone against an unoccupied hour, but the broom had found it out. To relieve his feelings Bob had promptly sallied out of doors when Toddie's back was turned, and catching sight of his pet aversion, an unneighborly bull terrier, had forced a fight. There could be but one termination. Bob had been dragged back to his master still uttering yells of defiance, defeated perhaps in body but undaunted in soul.

He was licking an honorable scar when his master stopped before him.

"I wish I was you," said Toddie.

"All very well," thought Bob.

"I wish I could love a bone."

This was simply adding insult to injury!

"Puir beastie, that 's a nasty bite ye 've got, but if it makes ye ony better to hear it I 'd change with ye and welcome. What 's a bite or a few fleas compared wi' a thirst like mine. No' that I 'm regrettin' what I 've done, but ye 'll never ken what ma throat 's like. This verra night I passed McPhee holdin' on to the railin's — sure as death the money itched in ma pocket."

Bob settled himself to sleep.

To and fro, to and fro marched Toddie. Occasionally he would mutter a broken sentence, or shake a bewildered head.

"Dang it!" he cried suddenly thumping the table with his clenched fist, "it isna natural. Say what ye like."

Bob said nothing.

"I 'll be losin' your respect next. This verra day did I no' offer the Major his brassie on the puttin' green. And then, me bein' sore flustered, and him glarin', what must I do but step right back on to the top of oor opponent's ball. 'Your hole,' says the Major to him — and gied me the one look. Man, Bob, ye may thank God ye 're no' a caddie!"

With a gesture that was almost passionate he

crossed to the window. The night was fine. Above the opposite roof he could see the stars. Still pursued by restlessness, and scarcely aware of what he did, he took his cap from its customary peg.

Bob rose to his feet.

"Na," said Toddie, "I 'm just goin' to look at the house. It would never do for you to come. Ye ken weel enough ye canna hold yer tongue. Here, lie doon an' sleep. I 'll tell ye all aboot it when I come back."

With the unquestioning obedience that was his creed, Bob curled himself once more on the warm hearth-stone.

CHAPTER XXI

THE street was deserted, the links a mute and mysterious obscurity. The winds were all asleep. Only the stars and the sea were awake.

The stars and the sea! The secrets of the world written in silver — the soul of the world expressed in song. Stars and sea! Potent magicians! What spells of insidious sentiment do ye not cast over all who wander lonely in the night, gazing, listening, even unconsciously, intent upon the memory of a woman!

Alas, poor Toddie!

He stood leaning against a friendly lamp-post, staring fixedly at a basement window. The light from behind it — only shining faintly through red curtains — exaggerated the warmth of his complexion. His were no enviable or even coherent sensations. The light from the basement window held him like a resolute eye. More — it mesmerized him. It represented Devina. Its red and angry glow was strangely symbolical. Toddie quailed before it, yet impotent to withdraw his gaze, continued to stare helplessly, pitifully; as though it were indeed Devina and he was humbly beseeching forgiveness.

Had it come to this — after all these years — in spite of all his convictions — all his prejudices? Where was his boasted independence? Where the self-sufficiency of his manhood? Gone. And instead of a Toddie existing in a shining and valorous isolation, like a lone star, we are forced to contemplate the spectacle of a Toddie helplessly revolving round an obscured sun, reduced to the condition of a mere satellite.

One consolation remains. He himself was not fully aware of his downfall. Love, like a humane surgeon, had dulled his sensibilities with the anesthetic of mental vacuity. He was as one drugged. Or — a more appropriate simile — as one intoxicated. Whisky being denied him, love offered him herself in a brimming draught; and Toddie — welcoming anything that could be drunk with honor — drained it to the dregs.

He was still staring vacantly at the window, when the sound of approaching footsteps caused him to start.

Another man!

As the newcomer moved slowly into the magic circle of light cast upon the pavement by the neighboring lamp, he was seen to pause, apparently lost in contemplation — the profound and brooding reverie of a man who looks at a house, but sees a woman.

In spite of the cold, Toddie grew hot all over.

The stranger struck him suddenly as an insufferable parody of himself. But all at once indignation was stabbed by a new emotion, keen as a sword-thrust — Jealousy.

The idea of a rival had never till that instant crossed Toddie's mind. But now, planted by suspicion, it flourished and grew big. That the newcomer had apparently mistaken the drawing-room for Devina's bedroom was a mere topographical error. Love is blind. That he should dare to stand there at all was the fact that rankled.

Bristling with antagonism — curiously similar to Bob when he stalked a foe — Toddie quitted the shelter of his lamp-post and ominously approached his man.

But before he could demand an apology, he halted with a gulp of amazement, for there — before him — he beheld The Major.

CHAPTER XXII

THE recognition was mutual.

"I didna think to see you here, Major," ejaculated Toddie, with the swift and immense relief caused by the total annihilation of jealousy.

"Nor I you," exclaimed Dale, surprised into equal frankness.

Having voiced the similarity of their sentiments, both relapsed into silence. Toddie was the first to break it. Clearing his throat, he spat nervously.

"I was oot," he began with feigned composure, but twirling preternaturally clean fingers. "Just oot takin' the air."

The Major confessed to a similar motive.

The admission struck Toddie with wonder, which suffered diminution when Dale volunteered the information that it was a fine night for the purpose.

"It is that," he assented, apparently with deferential cordiality, but intuitively conscious that the fineness of the night could not truthfully be held responsible.

With the dawn of a kindred emotion he noted his employer's impassivity, translating it in his own

hero-worshiping heart into a noble self-restraint that masked the same delicate and incomprehensible emotions as those which perplexed himself.

Touched as by an unexpected condescension he felt awkward. He could think of nothing worthy to be said. And little wonder. Converse with his employer had as a rule been confined to the practical, the professional. "We play at half-past ten to-morrow," or —"Take out the flag," or —"Toddie, call 'fore'; " responded to invariably by a cheerful —"Aye, sir," or —"I 'll dae that, Major," though undoubtedly pleasant, was no practice for an exchange of ideas of necessity so delicate as those befitting the present.

Toddie felt this. It was as though he had suddenly been requested to perform on the flute — an instrument, as all the world knew well — peculiarly sacred to the Major. And even as times without number he had stood patiently waiting by Dale's side on the links, motionless, anticipatory, until that thoughtful but somewhat slow golfer could make up his mind to play; so now, standing by his side in the yellow lamp-light, he waited with equal patience for him to speak.

"What were you doing here?" asked his employer.

"Me?" stammered Toddie, abruptly forced to take

cognizance of his actions. "I was just — I was just lookin' at yon window."

"Which window?"

Toddie stared. To his mind there was but one window worthy of consideration in the whole house.

"Yon red one, doon there."

Requested to state his reasons for this eccentric behavior, Toddie shuffled uneasily from one foot to the other.

"Weel," he said cautiously, "I canna exactly tell ye. It 's no' for the likes o' me to put it into words for the likes o' you. Na, na, I ken ma place, Major. I ken ma place."

The deprecatory tone in which this assertion was made appeared to rouse his employer's curiosity, for Dale, looking down at his caddie with some astonishment, again demanded an explanation.

Toddie scratched his head.

"I wish I could tell ye," he said with much simple earnestness, "but I canna even tell maself. There 's no doubt I 'm queer. Queer, aye, an' I never suspected it!"

He broke off with an ominous shake of the head; then, venturing an upward look into his companion's face and emboldened by Dale's silent attention, as well as by the semi-darkness, he continued:

"I believe what I was minded to say was this.

Ye see, it 's no use ma tellin' you — even if I could. For why? You 're a Club member, an' I 'm naethin' but a caddie. Oh, I ken fine it 's just your kindness, wishin' to give me the chance to talk. That 's you, Major, all over. But you, with all your book-learnin' an' what not, kens far better nor me why I was lookin' at that window."

He was interrupted by a gesture of negation.

"Hoots, Major!" Toddie's voice was full of a smiling and respectful protest —"Were you no' lookin' at a window yerself?"

There came no answer. Toddie, struck with alarm lest he should have offended, was mightily relieved to hear the Major's voice proposing a walk. In a tremor of gratitude and pride he lurched away beside his master; his heart divided between reluctance to leave the house without having seen Devina, and the ardent wish for broad day and a congested links, so that all St. Andrews might behold and envy.

The strangely-assorted companions traversed in silence the stretch of links that lay between the Fords' house and the sea; and having crossed a little bridge, found themselves upon a path which called upon them to decide whether they would keep to the landward of the dunes or trust themselves to the sands.

Dale suggested the latter.

Toddie assented. And truth to tell, had the Major

proposed a bath in the burn, he would have accepted with a like hearty and approving acquiescence.

Once away from the reign of lamp-light, it was by no means plain sailing, for the stars were inconveniently distant, and there was an entire absence of moon. Not once but many times did Toddie stumble over the rubbish heaps with which an enlightened Town Council had decorated the approach to the beach.

Upon a less auspicious occasion he would have bewailed the injury inflicted upon the Major's boots; but now, blissfully unconscious of damaged leather, he drove his little legs to their utmost speed in his efforts to keep pace with the lengthy stride of his employer.

A faint breeze fanned them, pleasantly saline, whispering of shells and weed, wrack and tangle, of all the discarded playthings of the inconstant sea.

At that hour master and man had the sands all to themselves. Behind them St. Andrews twinkled, far off, like a small and isolated galaxy of stars. Before them the beach receded into blue and mysterious depths, cheating the eye, hunted by the sound of waves. And even, as they walked, the night accompanied them, passed into their blood; and insensibly attuning them to tender reverie, suggested emotions that would have fled the light of day.

It became evident to Toddie that his companion

was thinking deeply. Nothing else, he felt convinced, could satisfactorily account for the abstracted and scholarly droop of that head — for those hands plunged so profoundly into the trousers pockets. His own attitude, be it noted, was precisely similar. But that was mere subconscious imitation, which, had it been pointed out to him, he would have sternly condemned as presumption.

For nothing in the world would Toddie have been guilty of the crime of interruption. To be privileged to walk by the side of one so learned — walk, mark you, as a companion, and by no means as the inevitable accompaniment of a golf-bag — was a sort of impossible dream, a delightful illusion of equality which modesty repudiated, but affection embraced. He had no wish to talk. To be permitted to share the Major's silence was in itself a sufficient and most bewildering honor.

"Toddie," said Dale all at once, "I 've been thinking."

"I made certain o' it," cried Toddie, with respectful admiration.

"Keep quiet," said his employer testily. Then, after a pause and with the air of one who ponders every word: "I 've been thinking that it is n't natural for a man to live alone."

Toddie's mouth opened to its widest.

"What 's your opinion?" encouraged his master.

Toddie drew a deep breath. Elevated thus unexpectedly to the dizzy post of adviser, he became nervous.

"Well?" said Dale.

"Weel," repeated Toddie, and hesitated — "It 's no' for the likes o' me —"

"Come. Out with it."

"Weel, Major — since ye ask me — what you need is a dog."

The Major stared.

"Aye, just that," cried Toddie, warming. "There 's naethin' to beat a dog at the comfortin'. The thoughtfulness o' him! When ye 're wet he dries ye, and when ye 're dry he wets ye. Hoots, I couldna get on at all withoot Bob. I tell ye, Major, to hear the wee besom yowlin', clean daft wi' joy in the kitchen, as soon as ever he hears ma step, is just — is just — weel, it 's better nor a drink."

Upon the tremendous simile he broke off. Then, as his companion seemed totally at a loss for words, he continued more calmly, yet with great earnestness:

"I 've often bothered aboot ye, Major. No offense, sir, I hope. Oh, I ken weel it 's no' ma place, nor hers eether, but we just couldna help it. I wouldna cared to speak at all, had ye no' sae kindly given me permeesion. I ken weel enough what ye 're feelin', for lately I 've felt bothered maself. It 's bein'

a bachelor does it. It doesna matter for the likes o' me, but you, you 're in the right aboot yerself. It isna natural for you to live alone. A flute is all verra weel in its own way; it speaks to ye, I ken that, but it canna jump on yer knees an' lick yer face."

This startling idea seemed to deprive the Major of speech; for his pace relaxed, and he stared downwards with a humorous and growing amazement into the face of his caddie.

"Very kind of you, Toddie," he said at length, controlling a desire to laugh, "but — I was n't thinking of myself."

Toddie peered up through the night at his employer. The memory of the drawing-room window caused a lenient and incredulous smile to twist his lips.

"I was thinking of *you*," said Dale.

No response.

"You ought to marry," continued the Major.

"*Me!* Me marry?"

"Why not? You are not too old. How old are you?"

"The same age as yerself, wantin' thirteen days," said Toddie promptly.

"Well —" continued Dale, somewhat taken aback, "well, it 's — it 's a sensible age. But you must n't lose time. Have you ever thought about it?"

"Never." This with tremendous emphasis.

"Marriage would suit you very well," went on the tempter's voice in the darkness. "To have some one to take care of you, and — and pour out the tea, and — and all that sort of thing, eh?"

The last words were uttered somewhat doubtfully — more to himself than to Toddie, who was waiting anxiously for further developments.

"You 'd make a decent husband," mused the Major, not without hesitation.

Toddie tried to thank him, but failed.

"You 're fairly steady. I have n't seen you drunk lately. How 's that?"

Toddie was heard to mutter, but the voice of the sea considerately drowned the explanation.

"Well, that 's a good thing anyway," approved the Major.

He paused, as though at a loss how best to continue; then, when they had walked some dozen yards in silence, he said abruptly:

"You ought to ask her soon."

The two men came to a standstill. Their figures, dark and mysterious even to each other, loomed dimly, as though they were component parts of the benighted sands, the starlit sky, the invisible and resounding sea.

Feelings of amazement surged up in Toddie's breast.

This from the Major — from the man whom he had schemed to save! He could not believe his ears. It was all his kindness, no doubt — but —

"Well?" encouraged Dale, inwardly pleased at his success. "Well, will you do it?"

Toddie came to a standstill.

"See here, Major, what makes ye talk like that?" he asked anxiously. "Ye 're no' feelin' sick, are ye?"

Dale was understood to remark that he never felt better.

"Umph!" grunted Toddie, much relieved, then in explanation: "Folk get awful daft-like notions when they 're sick. I once kent a man — Jock Macpherson it was — who said he couldna bear the smell o' whusky. They got the meenister to him, and in less than a week he was as drunk as ever. It was a grand recovery. Now, sir, if it 's no' a liberty, what makes ye bother yerself aboot me marryin'?"

For once the Major was at a loss for words. How could he explain, what was after all scarcely intelligible to himself, the incomprehensible desire of those who contemplate matrimony to see others following in their footsteps?

His silence filled Toddie with alarm.

"Here!" he spluttered, with a sudden gesticulation, "it 's no' for the likes — what I was minded — Ma God, Major, I canna put it into words."

"No need," said Dale, unaccountably obstinate. "Just do it."

"But there is need — an' I darena do it. You ken me, Major. Have I no' carried for ye for years? I 'm like yerself. Women are not for us. Oh, dinna think I 'll be settin' maself up alongside the likes o' you. The Lorrd forbid! But — we 're bachelors, are we no', sir?"

Toddie spoke wistfully, staring with pathetic desire for confirmation into the face of his employer.

"Y-es," assented Dale, seeing that he was expected to speak, "But what —"

"Weel," interrupted Toddie, "that 's it. That 's what I would be at. It 's the Lorrd's Will. Them that 's born bachelors must live bachelors and die bachelors. Aye, it 's safer. Mind ye, it 's you I 'm thinkin' of, Major. I fear for ye. Not a princess in the land but would just jump at ye. It 's an awful poseetion."

His companion smiled involuntarily. But it was no smiling matter for Toddie. Even while he pleaded, he was distressingly conscious of insincerity. The arguments he summoned to his aid were but the echoes of deceased convictions. They fell lamely from his lips. Even as he uttered them he thought of Devina and judged himself a traitor.

They resumed their walk, neither venturing to break the silence. The darkness and the solitude of

their surroundings, the sense of infinitude, the voice of the sea, all had conspired to work a miracle. For the time being the two men ceased to be caddie and employer. They became but two human beings confronted by the profound and eventful mysteries of life.

Toddie was the first to speak.

"See yon," he said, and pointed to the east where a faint lighting in fleecy clouds gave silver promise of a moon. "That's how I feel. No' what ye would call clear, but just glimmerin'. It's you that's done it, Major. I'm seein' things I never thought of before. Nae doot I was selfish. I wanted to keep ye like you was. I never thought of the loneliness. We're all alike in oor hearts, whether we put up at an hotel or live in Logie's Lane."

Dale listened in silence, secretly wondering.

"Aye," continued Toddie, "have I no' fought again' it maself? Whiles it grips ye, so it does. To see the wee bairns playin' theirselves in the street — what's a bachelor to do wi' that? An' when ye come hame of a night just dead beat — an' naebody carin'. Oh, I wouldna mention it to Bob. He thinks he's everything to me. But I canna help feelin' it all the same."

He sighed heavily. His discouragement moved his companion who would have spoken, but Toddie interrupted:

"Na, dinna fash yerself aboot me. It 's too late. I 'm done for. But you — there 's time yet. I 've been deceivin' ye; I 've been deceivin' maself, too. I didna mean a word o' what I said. That 's all over. Ask her, sir, ask her. Nae doot she 's just waitin' to be asked — Herd says they 're all alike. And, puir lassie, it 's easy seen she dotes on ye."

This altogether unexpected turning of the tables brought Dale again to a standstill. Toddie too came to a halt. For a while the master eyed the caddie in an amazed and ominous silence. The latter, alarmed at his boldness and fearful of results, watched him nervously.

"We 'd better be going back," said Dale abruptly. The tone of his voice caused Toddie to breathe again. They retraced their steps in a silence that was pregnant of import.

Not till the parting of their ways did the Major speak again.

"Ten fifteen to-morrow," he said quietly.

"Aye, sir," responded Toddie with alacrity. "I 'll be there."

CHAPTER XXIII

ONE night, and while Toddie was still in a state of hopeless despondency, he was cheered by another visit from Tam.

Thomas Macintyre always opened a door as though he were convinced that his deadliest enemy were lurking with hostile intent upon the other side. Hence both Toddie and Bob became aware of the identity of their visitor long before his white and anxious face made its appearance.

"Come in," encouraged Toddie, "ye 're worse nor a draft."

Nor was this comment without excuse, for the wind entered with the old man, and, causing the lamp to flicker, sent tremulous lights and shadows in pursuit of each other over the well-scrubbed furniture and the whitewashed walls. From without came an impression of elemental tumult carried on in the dimly lighted streets — of night encamping in the plains of darkness to the wild bugles of the wind, and the deep and muffled roll-call of the sea. When Tam, moving with extreme caution, slowly closed the door, peace fell suddenly.

"Take a seat," invited Toddie.

But Tam remained standing. His eyes, gradually accustoming themselves to the light, gazed around them in amazement.

"Weel," said Toddie, "what 's wrong with ye?"

"Naething," muttered Tam, still staring: then with apologetic hesitation, "it 's — it 's yer kitchen. It 's no' like the same place."

Toddie glanced sheepishly at his belongings.

"And you —" continued Tam, inspecting his host's face with a steadily growing astonishment, "you 're different. And Bob? What ails the beastie?"

"Hoots! He 's fine," growled Toddie. "Ye see, Tam, ye canna be expected to understand Bob's feelin's — he 's had a bath."

"A *what?*"

Toddie repeated the statement. Tam's eyes opened to their widest. For some time he scrutinized Bob with silent amazement, then turned to his host.

"Have you had a bath, too?" he asked with the utmost incredulity.

Toddie muttered an abashed affirmative; but at the next moment burst out with:

"Ye needna stand there sniggerin', Tammas Macintyre. What does the Lorrd tell us? Says He — nae doot to His disciples —' Cleanliness is next to Godliness.' Aye, them 's His verra words; an' isna

it better to have one o' them like me an' Bob, than neether o' them like you?"

Tam sobered suddenly.

"Dinna say that, Toddie."

"Weel, weel,— I didna mean to hurt yer feelin's, Tam; I ken you go to the Kirk, but somehow or ither I never can think of ye as releegious."

"I keep it to maself," quavered Tam, seating himself with dignity.

"Ye do that," agreed Toddie with conviction.

Relations being somewhat strained, host and guest stared in moody silence at the fire. In the chimney the wind was heard to rave ceaselessly.

All at once, Bob who had been glancing with a puzzled expression from one friend to the other, rose to his paws, and after sniffing with deep interest at Tam's boots, suddenly licked his hand.

"There," blurted Toddie with much feeling, "see that?"

"Eh?" ejaculated Tam, looking up; "see what?"

"That —" pointing with admiration at Bob, "that 's him all over. He 's settin' me an example."

"But — but you wouldna lick ma hand, would ye?"

"Oh, man, ye 're awful slow at the up-take! It 's the kindness o' him, I mean: the — the forgiveness. He sees ye 're in the wrong, but he canna forget ye 're in his house."

For a moment Tam stared with a half-resentful, half-superstitious amazement at the peacemaker, then, suddenly doubling upon himself, began to cough. The fit was long-enduring. It was moreover aggravated by sundry well-meaning thumps administered by Toddie.

"Stop! That 'll do!" gasped the sufferer when he could speak. "No need to bash me like that. I havena swallowed onything. I havena had the chance," he added with melancholy insinuation.

"That 's an awful cough o' yours," commented Toddie.

"Aye, I fear I 'm no' long for this world."

"You should see a doctor, Tam."

"Na, not me. I 'm awful loath to undergo a doctor. I mind once doctor Brodie gave ma Jean a pill to take next her stomach at night. Ma word! We both kept wishin' he had taken it hisself. Na, na, I 'll just slip awa' withoot bein' bothered."

"Weel," sympathized his friend, inspecting him with interest, "maybe ye 're right. Ye 're an auld man, and bald. We must all follow oor hair, Tam. It leads the way. When it goes, it 's time to shift."

"Hoots, no! Mony a young man is bald."

"Mair shame to him."

"And then, there 's bairns — they all begins bald."

"That 's a fact. It doesna seem natural. There is a mony queer things in life, Tam. Bob and me

thinks a loot aboot it when we 're no' bothered by veesitors. Ye should hear the beastie whimperin' in his sleep. He 's just puzzlin' it oot. Aye, life 's a queer thing. I whiles think it 's like waitin' on the first tee withoot a number. Ye just dawdle aboot, and crack with yer friends; and then, all at once, when ye 're least expectin' it, ye 're name 's called."

"Maybe," said Tam doubtfully, "maybe, but as you was sayin' I 'm an auld man, and I dinna want to start the carryin' again. I 've had enough o' it."

"Never fear. That 's anither thing I 've found oot. Ye see, ye 'll feel different when ye 're dead. The Lorrd wull see to that. Ye 're like an auld golf-ball, Tam. He 'll just remake ye. Nae doot ye 'll fly straight when ye 're an angel. Oh, aye!"

This blend of professional and angelic fancy caused Tam to gaze anxiously into Toddie's face, but his host, serious and thoughtful, was frowning at the fire.

"Will ye no' take something?" asked Toddie, suddenly awaking to the exigencies of hospitality.

Tam brightened.

"A drink?" suggested Toddie, not without hesitation.

Tam brightened still more.

"A cup o' tea?"

The light faded from Tam's eyes. He shook his

head, but the point of his tongue was seen to pass wistfully across his lips.

"Ye 'll get none here," blurted Toddie, shoving back his chair, and speaking with great energy.

"How 's that?"

Toddie opened his mouth to explain; but under the influence of a second thought, closed it again.

"That 'ull no' be a bottle I see there?" inquired his guest, in the tone of one reluctant to doubt the evidence of his senses.

"Aye," said Toddie dryly.

"Weel then —"

"It 's empty."

"Aw!"

"I emptied it maself. It was the ither night — after you left."

"I havena a doubt o' that," murmured Tam with envy.

"No' the way you 're thinkin'," continued Toddie gloomily. He frowned heavily at his boots, then added, "I emptied it into the grate."

This information was the last straw. Tam, incredulous, apprehensive, more than half inclined to disbelieve his ears, stared at Toddie; who, in his turn, gazed mournfully, yet not without austere self-approval at the lucky grate.

"Were ye drunk?" whispered Tam.

Toddie sighed. "No," he said wistfully. "Not whit *you* would call drunk, but just —"

"I see."

"But that wasna the reason," cried Toddie, hastily flinging out a hand.

"No?"

"No, Tam, that wasna the reason."

He paused, shook his head, then again sighed deeply.

"Yes?" suggested the old man.

"It was —," murmured Toddie softly, still gazing at the fire, and more than half unconscious of an auditor, "it was for her sake."

"For *her* sake?" ejaculated Tam loudly.

Toddie jumped; and flushing to his very ears, requested his guest to mind his own business.

CHAPTER XXIV

TEA, black, strong, and substantially assisted by bread and cheese, at length succeeded in restoring harmony. Having got the better of his disappointment, Tam applied himself philosophically to the meal with an avidity almost as intense as though its component parts were by nature purely alcoholic. Bob and Toddie watched his exertions, the former with tremulous interest, the latter with envy.

It would have puzzled Tam had he been requested to trace the associations of ideas that again led the conversation to women. It seemed to him later, however, that his every remark appeared, from the construction put upon it by his host, to be a distinct allusion to the hitherto forbidden sex. Thus, when he mumbled praises of Toddie's tea, he learned to his amazement that the beverage to be properly appreciated ought to be poured out by a woman — not just any woman, the Lord forbid, but one who, he was sternly warned, must forever remain nameless.

This, in addition to similar pieces of information, was volunteered in a manner so mournful and mysterious, so fraught with hidden meaning, and was

accompanied moreover with such sudden and forbidding frowns, such deep and inexplicable sighs, that as the meal progressed Tam became more and more a victim to bewilderment.

"To see me settin' here, drinkin' ma own tea, you would say I was happy?" demanded Toddie abruptly.

Tam — his mouth full — made various noises intended to express his hope that such was the case. The pitying and scornful smile with which these were received added considerably to his apprehension.

"I havena the heart to eat," growled his host. "I dinna seem to care what I swallow. Folk just bother me. The ither day I ate Bob's dinner by mistake, so I did. I'm aye thinkin' o' something else. Was I pleased to see you the noo? Weel, you're wrong. Oh, ye might have thought it by what I said — I grant ye that, but that meant nothin' — I was just makin' maself pleasant."

Tam was understood to mumble that he approved of the effort. But Toddie shook his head, and continued absent mindedly to count the remaining lumps of sugar.

"You're a widower?" he mused, transfixing Tam with melancholy eyes.

Tam assented with indifference.

"Man!" blurted his host, "I wonder ye can eat."

Much alarmed, Tam suspended operations; but

finding that Toddie had again forgotten him, he furtively continued the meal.

"What like was she?" questioned Toddie, after a long pause.

"What like? Aw —" Tam scratched his head. "She was just like ony ither woman."

"Nonsense. Is Div — I mean is Bob like ony ither dog? Is the Major like ony ither man? Was she wee or big? Answer me that."

After reflection Tam thought she might safely be described as "wee." Pressed further, he with much hesitation put her down as "fair."

"An' ye married a woman like that!" exclaimed his host in tones of the utmost commiseration.

Time and the links had so effectually dulled Tam's sensibilities that he did not resent this aspersion upon his matrimonial taste. Toddie was queer — queerer than ever. What of it? He — Tam — was no longer hungry or cold. Puffing with tremulous satisfaction at a borrowed pipe, he congratulated himself that he was saving his own tobacco.

The wind, howling without, but emphasized the cosiness of the little kitchen, warmly illuminated by the lamp and the leaping flames of the good coal fire. The old man had no wish to talk, still less did he desire to quarrel. Sunk into a state of bodily well-being he forgot decrepitude, poverty, anxiety — forgot his cheerless home, the weary treadmill of the

links, the short and desolate span of life still allotted to him — forgot even the days, now gone forever, when he too had known strength, and hope, and love. With his head bent forward and the firelight playing over the deep furrows of his weather-beaten countenance he gave himself up to the realization of an unusually comfortable present.

Toddie looked at him. Something in his guest's appearance caused the little caddie's heart to expand with the pity and the pleasure it would have felt had Tam been a stray dog. Yet so unprepossessing did the old man appear that Toddie — to whom speaking was but audible thinking — blurted incredulously —

"Ye mean to tell me she loved ye?"

"Eh?" said Tam, blinking. "What 's that ye 're sayin'?"

"Yer wife. Did she love ye?"

"Aye, did she." He drew himself up — his voice seemed to find a long-forgotten note of self-assurance. "She was awful fond o' me, Toddie. I mind sittin' like this at the fire and never thinkin' o' her, an' her comin' behind an' strokin' ma hair. She was a fine cook. I never taste a haggis withoot thinkin' o' her. We was one flesh, ye may say."

Toddie leaning forward, his hands on his knees, listened eagerly.

"Aye," continued Tam, spitting into the fire and visibly flattered by his host's attention. "She was

real bonnie once. Mony a lad was after her. There was Jock Simpson. Ye mind him? No? Weel, he's been in the kirkyard this forty year. And Willie Herd, and Alec Gow, all braw lads. But she liked me best. She was aye particular."

He made a movement as though to adjust his collar, but finding none, meandered on:

"I couldna bring maself to say the word —"

"I can understand that," interrupted the listener with sympathy.

"Can ye? Aye, it grips ye. Ye feel dry. It's worse nor wantin' a drink. Weel, Toddie, one day me and her was on the rocks. I mind she was lookin' at the sea. Thinks I —'She's forgotten me.' Hoots, I was young and easy took in." He smiled knowingly.

"Go on," said Toddie.

"Weel, I mind tryin' to speak, but, as I was sayin', the words wouldna come. Then — what think ye?"

He paused and looked up with a sly twinkle into the serious and deeply interested face of his host.

"I found a piece o' chalk."

"A piece o' chalk?" repeated Toddie, mystified.

"Just that. Ye see, there was a black rock at ma feet, so I writes on it: 'Will ye have me?' 'What's that?' says she. Women are aye curious, Toddie, they canna help —"

"Go on wi' yer story, man."

"Aye, aye, but dinna fluster me. Weel, I put the chalk doon and looks away. Ma heart was like to choke me. 'What will she say?' thinks I. But she said nothin'."

"She said nothin', Tam?" Toddie's voice betrayed unaccountable disappointment.

"Na! but bide a wee. There's more to come." The old man chuckled in smiling reminiscence, rubbing his claw-like hands up and down the legs of his trousers; then sobering:

"I confess to ye I was nervous. I could hear her moving, but darena look round. After a wee whiley I keeked at her. She was standin' verra straight and still, wi' her back turned, but on the rock just below what I'd written was the one word, 'Yes.'— Ma God! Toddie, I'll — I'll never forget it."

Toddie stared at him. All at once he seemed to see his guest in a new light. Then he said slowly:

"I never thought it could be done like that."

"D' ye never read yer *Citizen*?" asked Tam with mild superiority.

"Whiles. No' verra often."

"Weel, ye should. There was a bonnie story all aboot it no' sae lang syne. But ye 're no' listenin'?"

"D' ye think gentlemen like — club members, I mean — asks leddies that way?"

"Of course they does," assured Tam with great energy. "Was he no' a duke in the story? You

should ha' read it, Toddie. His letter to her was amazin'— just amazin'. I didna think there was so mony fine words in the language. And clever!— See here, it was that clever I didna understand half o' it."

CHAPTER XXV

THE rupture with Toddie had results more unexpected and disconcerting than Devina had anticipated. It cast a shadow over her life. For the time being it even warped her character. It filled her, even as it did him, with indefinable melancholy. Not that she allowed this incomprehensible heart-sickness to interfere with the discharge of her duties. On the contrary, it goaded her into a fever of activity. Labor dulled the ache, made her forget the emptiness. She found in it, if not an antidote, at least an outlet. Never before had she been so dour, so inexorable, so despotic. Never before had she been so full of energy, so strenuous, so unsparing of herself or of others. Work negligently performed was to her what the red rag is to the bull. It stirred her to anger. It caused her to explode into fierce reproofs, into bitter sarcasm — for which, be it whispered, she reproached herself the moment they were uttered. She would fling herself into the breach in a fury of zeal, and, even while engaged in making good the defection, would lash the shirker with the full force of her intemperate tongue.

Jessie was the principal sufferer during those evil days. Many times did that volatile damsel, dissolved into tears, fly to the cook for sympathy and support, and the two women taking counsel together, would plan petty retaliations with which to harass the tyrant. Their efforts met with the failure they merited. They fell harmlessly to the ground, blunted against the armor of Devina's profound and contemptuous indifference.

Had her companions but known how near Devina herself was oftentimes to the tears she so unsparingly ridiculed, it is probable that in their amazement they would have left her alone. But they were never to know it.

Another apparently unaccountable result of the break was that Devina wavered in her self-imposed task of guarding her young mistress. The exact reason is not easy to find. It may have been either that her own dawning partiality for one of the opposite sex was to a certain extent responsible, or that deprived of Toddie's assistance she lost heart. Dimly she herself surmised the latter. It inflamed her to fresh wrath. That that which she had so near to her heart should be thwarted by the delinquency of a man was a state of affairs not to be countenanced for a moment. Grimly, obstinately, she strove to carry on the combat single-handed. But the effort was beyond her. The strange apathy from which she suf-

fered, and for which she was at a loss to account, paralyzed her efforts. The persistency of the Major and the gay, unconscious, and innocent opposition of Charity foiled her at every point.

Yet, all unawares within her breast, the seed sown by Charity was slowly taking root. The change came gradually, imperceptibly, with unforeseen rallies and relapses, like the capricious transitions of winter passing into spring.

Had she, after all, judged the man too harshly? Had she made allowance sufficient for his upbringing, his irregular life, his vicious companions?

Brooding over his memory with a newly awakened and wholly involuntary leniency, much that was praiseworthy leapt unbidden to her mind — his simplicity, honesty, loyalty.

Fain would she have discredited their existence — so loath was she to admit that aught good was to be found in man — but they would not be denied. They returned to her with the recollection of his every look, his every spoken word. With a sense of justice, as strong as it was impartial, she placed them all to his credit. As she realized them, instinctively and with a vague reluctant feeling of satisfaction, she discovered that whatever his faults, yes, even despite his unsubstantiated claim of sobriety, he could be trusted. This was a great concession, an immense advance, for when a woman decides that a man is trustworthy and

experiences sensible pleasure thereat, it is because she has already, consciously or unconsciously, confided something to his keeping.

No suspicion of sentiment shed the rose-light of dawning romance around the broken friendship. As far as Devina was aware, her thoughts of Toddie were purely practical. Up to the fatal moment when she had discovered his backsliding, she persuaded herself that he had been only a coadjutor, an unpalatable but necessary part of the concocted plan. Now he represented a failure, a disappointment. That was all — at least all she would confess to herself.

This obstinate self-deception was singularly characteristic of Devina. Hers was no nature to transfer allegiance lightly, or to build with indelicate precipitation upon the ruins of the past. Between her and the possibility of a second lover there yawned a gulf which she deemed forever impassable, an aching void wherein lurked the demons of doubt and bitter unbelief.

Pondering upon him, as she did many times, even when apparently most engrossed in work, she discovered that he reminded her of her father. No advocate more powerful could have been found to plead Toddie's cause.

Deep in some torture-chamber of her soul Devina still suffered, still accused herself of misapprehension, and even of cruelty. The shock of her father's

death was with her always, a grievous and abiding calamity. Merciless in her judgments upon herself, the memory of that terrible day when something under a tarpaulin, something motionless that dripped, had been carried into her home, was like an inexorable voice crying aloud, reiterating her guilt. That she had acted rigidly according to her comprehension of the right mattered nothing. The result had been calamitous. She had failed, and failure gnawed at her heart. How unavailing was remorse! He was dead. And the unfeeling world went on just the same. Forgetting his many shortcomings, Devina remembered only that she might have been kinder.

This unexpected, and indeed disconcerting resemblance gave her pause. In a tremor of alarm she asked herself if she had not been guilty of another injustice. For a moment she was beset with doubt, softened, womanly, full of generous impulses, yearning to make compensation, longing to right the wrong. But the mood passed. The recollection of Toddie's deception, flashing to mind, caused her to harden. She did not believe that he had amended his evil ways. No! no! — that was all Miss Charity's credulity. The memory of her own weakness fanned the flame. Grimmer and more forbidding than ever she flung repentance to the winds.

But the reaction came again when, her duties for the day over, she was alone in her bedroom. The lit-

tle room was to her a sanctuary. It was a part of herself: its austerity and air of cloistered quiet were as the reflection of her soul — its exquisite cleanliness and neatness as the mirror of her life. A text nailed to the wall and a photograph of her father were its only adornments. There, freed from all observation and from the necessity of self-control, she would give herself up to the moods that laid imperative hands upon her. Often an immense discouragement would fall like a crape veil upon her spirits. Often, too, a pathetic wistfulness would cause her lips to tremble and her heart to swell.

Many a time would she stand at her little window gazing outwards at the rain-swept street, while the mournful blasts howled and sobbed, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, absorbed and tortured by the distracting chaos of her thoughts. It seemed to her that at such moments she came face to face with her own heart. Arraigned before its judgment seat dissimulation was no longer possible. Her mask of indignation dropped from her; anger and even bitterness were forgotten. Her whole mental attitude became one of painful indecision, of interminable questionings, of one seeking the truth with all the might of her tormented heart.

And the truth came to her, as it comes always to those who seek it with sincerity. It stood before her in the darkness, and its voice was sad and hopeless as

the wind that sighed without. It said: "Devina, you are unhappy. You miss this man. You care for him more than you think. You have been merciless, cruel, hasty as you always are. This is your punishment. You have lost your one chance of happiness. No one will ever care to meet you now. All your life you will be sad and lonely and desolate."

CHAPTER XXVI

ONE evening Charity had occasion to send to the chemist.

"I 'll go," said Devina, and marched upstairs to put on her hat.

"Goin' out?" cried the cook in astonishment, when Devina appeared in the kitchen.

"Are ye after meetin' onybody?" asked Jessie.

Devina denied the insinuation with scorn, but flushed as she saw them exchange smiles.

"Chemist?" inquired the cook skeptically of the contents of her frying pan.

"It was coal last time," tittered Jessie, turning from the contemplation of her face in a pocket mirror. "Are ye ashamed o' him, Devina?"

But Devina, disdaining to answer, swept past her tormentors, and letting herself into the night, banged the kitchen door behind her.

For a moment there was silence. Then the cook tasted a sauce critically, wiped a red finger on her apron, and wagging an ominous head towards the door, said:

"I wouldna trust her the length o' a clothes line.

Dark ones are ay deep." She ruminated over this incriminating fact for some time, then with a burst of resentment and jerking impatiently at the regulator: "Interferin' thing! I 've no patience with her."

"Settin' herself up to be that partic'lar, too," chimed in Jessie in a high aggrieved voice; "as if it was a lassie's fault that the men prefer a bonnie face."

"I sometimes wonder hers doesna turn the milk," agreed the cook. "Hand me the salt, Jessie. Now mark ma words, ma name 's no Lizzie McCrum if I dinna give ye ill news o' her one day. There was just such anither black woman in ma last place. Black 's the color o' Satan."

"They say queer things about her in the dining-room already," mused Jessie, arranging a curl.

"Is that a fact?" ejaculated her companion, turning hastily.

"Aye, at lunch the ither day — Friday it was — ye mind we 'd company — says wee Miss Stewart eatin' her third meringue, says she: 'Devina 's a character.' What did she mean by that?"

The cook's brows puckered.

"Did she say *is* a character, or *has* a character?"

"Is."

"That 's queer. But, hoots, I wouldna set much store by what that wee thing says. Always at the cards, I hear. I doubt if she can plain boil a potato.

'*Is* a character?' There 's no sense in that. And what does the likes o' her ken aboot Devina's character onyway? She should come to me."

"Or me," snapped Jessie spitefully, but the cook swept on:

"But there, that 's the gentry all over. To folk like them a lassie's character is not what she is, but what her last mistress thinks she is n't."

"That 's a true word," acquiesced Jessie, with feeling.

"And more nor that," cried the cook with the warmth of one airing an ancient grievance. "Them leddies just chuck aboot our characters from one to the ither, withoot as much as by yer leave. No character will stand that. Na, na, ye must handle a character cannily. Ye must take it with faith, like — like ye do an egg."

"What a beautiful thought, cook," murmured Jessie, with admiration. "Ye put me in mind o' a book."

"Aye, a cookery book. But I 've no' been a cook ten year for nothin'. Now I could tell your character better nor Miss Charity ony day."

"Could ye?" cried Jessie, not without anxiety.

"Aye, could I. But never fear; I 'm not one to spoil a lassie's chance. Now, stop yer talkin'; I must attend to ma fish."

Meanwhile Devina was nearing the town. The

night was dark, yet not black, for a glimmer of starlight was in the air. A hint of spring was perceptible — a languor and warmth, as yet unseasonable, but which needed only the confirmation of another month to express itself in leaves. From time to time, as Devina strode past the openings that led to the sea, she was met by the voices of waves. Murmuring to her softly out of the darkness they drew her thoughts from human strife to the contemplation of the infinite. As she listened, her bosom swelled with feelings that eluded language, even as they eluded comprehension. Vaguely wondering at herself, she allowed a gentler mood to take possession of her; her pace involuntarily relaxed, the poise of her head became less defiant, and, seen by the light of an occasional lamp, her expression was characterized by a sweet and dreaming solemnity.

At the corner of Grey Friars' Gardens she hesitated. Either of two streets now led to her destination. By the one she would pass within a few yards of Toddie's house; by the other, and nearest way, she would give it a wider berth. She chose the former.

Her commission transacted, she turned her steps homeward. Her pace relaxed still more. An inexplicable feeling of disappointment came stealing over her. She did not analyze it, yet she could not doubt its existence, though it was less palpable than the starlight, less visible than the wind. It was like a sea

mist through whose diaphanous folds she saw the present stretching itself in weary and lonely monotony far into an illimitable future.

Passers-by looked at her. But Devina heeded not. Engrossed in her thoughts, dignified, stately, yet conveying to the thoughtful observer an impression of strength and grace of movement, she pursued her solitary way.

She had retraced some two-thirds of her road, and had left the more crowded thoroughfares behind her, when she was startled by a familiar voice, high pitched and incredulous.

"That 'ull no' be Devina Greig?"

Turning hastily, Devina recognized Tam Macintyre. They were old acquaintances, for Tam still occupied the house in Castle Street, next door to the one that had been her home.

"Aye, it 's me," she assented, not ungraciously.

Tam cautiously detached himself from a lamp-post.

"Dearie me! dearie me!" he mused, oscillating gently. "I 've not seen ye this long while back." Then with an interest and warmth of affection that surprised himself, he added: "Ye 're doin' weel, I hope?"

"Fine," said Devina.

"That 's right. I 'm glad to hear ye say that. Not that I had ma doubts. Oh, no! for ye were aye

steady. Still, I 'm glad, for ye see —" he touched her sleeve with a timidly propitiatory gesture, " ye see, I aye liked yer father."

A wave of self-reproach broke in memories over Devina. She did not speak, for she was back in the past.

Tam, peering up at her and trying to consolidate her image into a single, stable, and recognizable entity, wondered nervously if he had offended.

A man passed them — his footsteps ringing loud on the stone pavement — and seeing them standing silent and motionless, smiled as he scented a misunderstanding.

" You 're still at the carryin', I suppose? " inquired Devina. She put the question without interest, and without looking at him; influenced, it would appear, by motives of forced politeness.

Tam replied with a dreary affirmative. He then proceeded to discuss the state of the links, wandering from thence into pathetic details connected with his private affairs. But his words came thickly and with difficulty, and soon broke off, for he saw with dull disappointment that she was not listening.

Under the vertical rays of the lamp she stood motionless, gazing with unseeing eyes into the distance. Her clear-cut, regular, and severely handsome features, partially illuminated, betrayed the melancholy trend of her thoughts. Her dejection communicated

itself to her companion. The flicker of artificial courage, inspired by drink, that had emboldened him to speak to her, oozed from out his timid heart, leaving in its place a vague regret that he had not allowed her to pass unchallenged.

The night wind breathed gently upon them, and from above, the stars looked down.

"Who was in your match to-day?" inquired Devina abruptly. As she spoke she turned and looked full at him.

"Ma match? The day?" stammered Tam, taken by surprise. "Let me see — ye mean who was I carryin' for?"

"No."

"No? Oh, I see — ye mean who was the ither man carryin' for?"

"I mean nothing o' the sort."

Her anger, not only unexpected, but undeserved, caused Tam to gape.

"I 'm sorry I spoke like that," she muttered awkwardly. "You was right. It — it was that I was meanin'."

"Who was the ither man carryin' for?"

"Aye."

"For Major Dale."

She made no comment; but Tam, watching her nervously, saw her straighten herself and draw a deep breath. The sight revived his courage.

"It was a grand match," he quavered, in smiling reminiscence, "though to tell ye the honest truth, Devina, I wouldna have got into it had it no' been for Toddie."

He nodded with conviction. Then suddenly aware that she was listening to him, he continued earnestly and with a pleasant and unfamiliar feeling of importance:

"He 's been a good friend to me, I 'm tellin' ye. There 's few like him. Here! See them trousers? They were Major Dale's once. I canna tell ye all Toddie 's done for me, ye wouldna believe it. He gets me into his matches whenever he can, and not only that, but keeps his eye on *both* balls! Not that I 'm needin' it," he added quickly, "for I can see fine; but that 's just to show ye his kindness o' heart. Aye, an' we never lost one the day, but, hoots, ye 're a woman and ye 'll no' ken all that means, and maybe I 'm wearyin' ye?"

"Go on," said Devina.

Tam — who asked nothing better — continued to enumerate instances of Toddie's good nature. Bob was instanced as a witness, likewise the Major. Toddie's past supplied subject-matter for several long-winded anecdotes of a professional nature; and it is curious to note that, though these were related in Tam's worst manner, Devina's attention never wavered.

At length, having exhausted his store of panegyric, Tam confessed that the present state of Toddie's health gave him cause for anxiety.

At this, he paused, anticipating a question, but none came. Yet, that he still held her interest was past question, for as she stood before him in the yellow lamp-light, there was apparent a tension and rigidity in her attitude that betokened one who waits.

"He 's no' like the same man," sighed Tam.

"What 's wrong with him?" she asked with apparent indifference. Tam's fingers played tentatively over the bristles of a five days' beard.

"That 's what I canna exactly make oot. Ye might say it was the one thing, and ye might say it was the ither, and whatever ye said ye might be wrong."

Stung by her exclamation he continued quickly: "Not that I havena ma suspeecions. Oh, aye! I may be slow at the uptake, as Toddie says, but I can see through him with all his cleverness, so I can.

"It 's queer it should have come to him," he continued after a slight pause. "It 's like a judgment. It doesna seem natural. Sandy Herd, now, ye could understand, though I 'd be awful sorry for the lassie. But *Toddie!* It beats all!"

His wheezy old man's laughter terminated in a fit of coughing. Devina looked on grimly. When he

had recovered, she said scornfully, "No doot it 's funny, but I canna see —"

"Canna *see!*" he interrupted, with tremulous energy. "Canna see! When I 'm tellin' ye that it 's a woman!"

Her start was not lost upon him, but before he could speak again a man lurched past them and, recognizing Tam, inquired with a hiccough if they had leased the pavement.

"That 's Sandy Herd," whispered Tam to his companion; "him I was tellin' ye about. See him! Ma word, he was near doon that time! These railin's are fine useful things. There he goes. A shilling's worth o' whusky there, I 'll take ma oath. Bravo, Sandy! If ye can keep yer legs as far as the Temperance Hall it 's all ye can manage the night. To think —"

He was interrupted by her voice, grave and full of constraint:

"Who is she?"

Tam stared anxiously. What was wrong with the woman?

"I dinna ken," he faltered, still wondering, and gazing timidly at the outline of her averted face. "I ken everything aboot her except her name."

"How 's that?" She had turned impulsively.

"Ah, ye 're astonished! Ye didna think I was that clever? Folk are aye deceived aboot me."

But his complacent chuckle died before the trouble in her eyes.

"I ken she 's big and black," he went on. "Aye, and hard to move. Bob likes her. And Toddie thinks all the world of her. She gave him tea once. There 's some secret between them, though he near choked me for tryin' to find oot what it was. Ah, nae doot ye think that queer. I 'm not surprised. I think it 's rideeculous maself."

CHAPTER XXVII

FROM far off came the dulcet and dreamy strains of a barrel organ. The music — a popular melody, but softened and refined by the distance — moved Devina profoundly. It played upon her mood as the fingers of a musician might play upon a harp. The sweet and floating sounds were one with the very spirit of sentiment, impregnated with an alluring and indescribable melancholy; the sadness that defies analysis, yet lurks forever on the threshold of the beautiful. Stealing on the night, no merely mechanical combination of notes, but a river of mysterious human emotion, flowing on, on, they inundated the listening soul with dreams, with hopes, with longings, and with aspirations.

Devina stood entranced. She did not think of these sounds as music, but as a message, the expression of a wonderful, an almost incredible happiness, a gift bestowed unexpectedly upon her, and her alone.

For as all that one hears, and all that one sees, during moments of intense emotional perception ceases to exist save as the audible or visible presentment of the

preoccupied soul, so this music became to Devina but as the whisper of her awakening heart.

The man cared for her! And as she told herself this, not once but many times, as though repetition could bring reality nearer, make it more credible, more of a piece with the work-a-day fabric of her life, she pressed her hands to her bosom to stifle the gladness that would not be stifled.

For a brief and beautiful moment her doubts disappeared. In their place fluttered a host of new and overpowering emotions, womanly shrinking, undefined but intensely realized, deliciously troubling, one with the strength and the weakness of her sex.

She was a woman. Too long had she disbelieved in love — too often had she scoffed at the love affairs of others. This was nature's revenge. Yet she accepted defeat with a wondering gladness.

The music grew fainter — fainter — died away. As one torn from a beautiful dream, Devina awoke to her surroundings — the dark and deserted street, with its oasis of yellow lamp-light; the somber shadows of the houses; with here and there a lighted window faintly combating the obscurity; the cold and wandering night airs; the remote and passionless stars; the dreary monotone of the sea — all impressed themselves upon her, a circle of realities hemming her round like the walls of a prison house.

Like a torrent, damned for a season, that bursts

from all restraint, her doubts swept back upon her. In their train came unbelief, bitterness, hostility; regrets that rankled, memories that stung.

The height to which he had soared but made the fall more poignant. To anger against herself was added the disappointment of one who loses hope at the very moment when happiness seemed within her grasp.

A sudden movement recalled Tam to her attention. He was leaning against the lamp-post, gazing vacantly at the pavement, the image of a patience born of senility and semi-intoxication. The sight inflamed her to sudden wrath.

"Ye 've been lyin' to me," she said.

Nothing but the lamp-post prevented Tam from collapsing.

"Ye 're drunk," she continued. There was a fierce and concentrated resentment in her voice that cut like a lash. So overcome was Tam that he could only stare. His bewildered helplessness was as oil to flame.

"How dare ye!" she vociferated. "Makin' fun of me! No doot he put ye up to it. Just what he would do. And you! — you 're just the sort of silly auld man that would lend yerself to ony indecency. I can see you two laughin' over it. Aye, it 's funny —" and she laughed.

Had he been less dazed Tam would have distin-

guished in her hard and mirthless merriment the dull minor note that rings in every forced laugh.

"What 's wrong with ye?" he blurted, for she had turned from him with suspicious abruptness.

She made no reply.

"Are ye gone daft? What way of speakin' is that? I may be auld, but I 'm not silly. And as for bein' drunk, could I stand like this if I was drunk? Funny, says you? Me!—" His voice rose indignantly. "I never was funny in my life. Devina! I canna keep on talkin' to yer back. Devina! Speak to me. What is it?"

"Leave me alone."

"I will not. I believe ye 're cryin'. Oh, no use to shake yer head — I 've been married maself. What did I say —"

"Naething. I 'm goin' home."

"Na, na, bide a wee. Was it aboot Toddie?"

"No."

"Weel, never mind; but, as sure as death, it 's God's truth I was tellin' ye. When a man gives up the drink — aye, forgets his manners and never offers ye a drop — when he takes to cleanin' hisself oot o' mind; and reddin' up his kitchen so that ye canna think where to sit; aye, and washin' his verra dog, poor beastie; there 's but one reason — Are ye listenin'?"

"No. And I dinna believe a word ye 're sayin'.

You men are all alike. You 'd swear black was white to please each other, so ye would."

"You 're wrong there," piped Tam eagerly. "I dinna hold with swearin', and neether does Toddie. And why should I say black was white to please him? He 's no' carin'."

"Weel, I dinna want to hear onything aboot him. I 'm goin' home." But in spite of her repeated assertions, she did not move.

There ensued a long silence. Tam shivered, then buttoned his threadbare coat across his shrunken chest, for the night air blew cold. He was tired, and longed for his bed; but while this inexplicable woman stood there, grim and silent, he dared not put his longings into execution.

Gazing wearily at her back, seen as a dark and impressive shadow, he wondered vaguely why she hated Toddie — what had angered her — why she did n't go home — how long she would keep him standing there in the darkness and the cold. Memories of his dead wife and little tiffs they had had floated through his sleep-oppressed brain. He had always prided himself upon his knowledge of the sex, save during these temporary misunderstandings. "Let them talk," had been his motto. "When a woman talks," he confided philosophically to a friend, "ye ken the worst." It was with relief that at last he heard her voice.

"How long — how long d' ye pretend he 's been like that?"

Tam sighed wearily: "I 'm no good at pretendin', ye 'd find me oot afore I started; and what 's the use o' tellin' you? You won't believe me. And why d' ye care at all? It 's naething to you if Toddie is breakin' his heart."

The dark figure by his side made a sudden movement, then became rigid.

"Did — did he tell you that?" Her voice came to him low and stifled. Tam uttered a crow of contempt.

"Him? No' likely! He 's not one to talk. He did say once it was for her sake. I was near forgettin' that. Aye, and that he carried her somewheres or ither. But, hoots, Toddie 's queer at times. I didna pay much attention to him; for, between you and me, he takes a body in wi' his cleverness, always meanin' things he doesna say — parables he calls it — and if it was true he was no more conscious o' lettin' it oot than a bairn. He 's that ignorant o' women, somethin' peetyful. I wish I knew the woman. Ma word, I 'd give her a talkin' to! Spoilin' his life. I believe I 'd shake her."

The old man had assumed an expression of comical ferocity, but the effect was momentary, and it was in his customary meek and despondent voice that he continued:

"She must be terrible hard. No sort of a woman at all. Ma Jean wouldna have behaved like that. Big and black. To see the man starvin' hisself — aye, ye may weel jump, it 's true, and if she 's no' careful she 'll have his death to answer for, so she will. I wish I could save him from her, for she canna be worthy o' a love like that. Aye, it 's more serious than you think, much more serious. I tell ye, Devina —" he leant towards her, sinking his voice to a whisper full of awful significance: "He emptied a whole bottle o' whusky intil the grate."

To Tam's satisfaction this information impressed his listener as profoundly as he had hoped. Little by little, acting apparently under compulsion, she had turned towards him till he could see her profile, dark against the circle of lamp-light. Something in her attitude and expression induced him to say:

"I see fine ye 're moved. I ken you 've a kind heart, Devina. Me and you canna understand a hard woman like that. Her that ought to be sae proud and grateful. Weel, it 's gettin' late, and I must away home to ma supper. Guid night to ye."

He seized and shook her unresponsive hand, and glad to make his escape, hurried off in the direction of the town.

CHAPTER XXVIII

"IS it going to rain?" demanded Dale.

"Weel, Major," responded Toddie, eying the speaker with a deep-seated melancholy, which he tried in vain to disguise under an impassive exterior, "weel, Major, ye might think so, and again ye might not."

"I believe," retorted his employer with some heat, "that if I were to ask your name you would wriggle out of it with something ambiguous. Here, give me the driver."

"What did he mean by that?" questioned Toddie gloomily of Tam, as they followed the players.

"I didna hear. What was it he said?"

"He called me am — ambeeguous."

"Did he, though? Man, ye 've to put up wi' a lot from that Major o' yours."

"Hoots, no! He doesna mean it. Nae doot it 's some dirt he 's picked up in furrin parts. It 's a weary world, Tam. Things goes wrong that easy."

"That 's what I tell ye — though it 's the first time ye 've agreed wi' me."

Toddie sighed.

"What are ye sighin' at? Ye 're no' botherin' over what he said?"

"Na, I wasna thinkin' o' him. And that wasna sighin', that was just fetchin' ma breath. Aye, sir, I 'm comin'."

"Will I reach it with the cleek?" questioned Dale.

"Take yer brassie, sir, and go for it. What are we givin' him?"

"Four strokes."

"Four strokes! We 'll beat him easy. Here ye are. Keep yer head doon. That 's it. A bonnie shot That 'ull dae fine."

They reached the green. Toddie, flag in hand, stood at attention.

"You to play, sir," he said encouragingly to his employer.

"That 's one up," he remarked to Tam, as he replaced the flag. "And you can take it from me that it 'ull no' be the last."

"Maybe," assented Tam indifferently. "It 's awful cold the day, ma rheumatics is something cruel. What a wind! — it 's like snaw."

Toddie turned a thoughtful eye upon the low drifting clouds.

"I canna think what brings them oot in this weather," continued Tam. "No' but what it 's good for us; but if I was rich I 'd sit by the fire all day — would na you?"

"Na, not me. I 'd buy a watch and chain for — for somebody I ken aboot, and a collar for Bob, and maybe a coat for yerself."

"Would ye now? That 's like you, Toddie. But it 's a pair o' boots I 'm needin'."

"That 's a fact," agreed his friend, inspecting Tam's footgear critically. "Ye might pick up a better pair nor that on the sands."

At this point the conversation was interrupted by Tam's employer demanding if his caddie had seen his ball.

"Aye, sir, Oh, aye," responded Tam nervously. The affirmative was forced from him by long habit, but for all that he gazed blankly around, inspecting each tuft of grass with a vague and hopeless indecision.

"Here y' are!" cried Toddie.

The game proceeded.

"Ye must keep a better eye on it than that, Tam," remonstrated his friend good naturedly.

"Aye, but between you and me ma sight is no' what it was. It was ma wife did it. The woman had a stroke, ye ken, and for six months I sat up wi' her all night."

"And carried all day?"

"Aye, what else was there to do?"

Toddie looked at the bent and shuffling figure with sympathy.

"I 've somethin' to tell ye," whispered Tam mysteriously, "but we 've nae time the now — maybe — Ah, it 's what I feared — here 's the rain!"

Over the vast and undulating stretch of the links swept a veil of drifting vapor. It came from the sea — the Northern sea, mother of storms, and wind, and rain; breeder of insensate strife and appalling monotony. In a few moments the distant hills and the nearer coast were blotted from sight. No spot on earth can be more abandoned to desolation, more productive of melancholy, than this spit of land when the storm-clouds muster. At such seasons all is enveloped in a winding sheet of gloom, and the insidious approach of the mists is only to be equaled in eerieness with the plaint of the unseen waves moaning to the sands.

The rain thickened. At first but a few isolated drops, it swiftly increased in volume until it concealed even the most adjacent landmarks. It beat pitilessly upon the golfers, rendering play, if not impossible, at least a labor of much difficulty.

The Major and his opponent, somewhat protected by their large golfing umbrellas, were less to be commiserated than were Toddie and Tam. The rain seemed to take a fiendish pleasure in blinding the caddies' eyes, in trickling in cold streams between their mufflers and their ill-fitting jackets, in penetrating between the cracks in their down-trodden boots.

After a short consultation the game was abandoned.

"Let 's get to shelter," suggested Toddie to Tam, as their masters disappeared in the direction of the town. "It 's no' that far, and maybe this winna last."

Tam acquiesced, as indeed he would have agreed to any suggestion that emanated from Toddie. The erection, designated the shelter, stood on an eminence surrounded by gorse. Built in the form of a capital T, it offered protection in all weathers.

"Toddie," said Tam, when the two friends had seated themselves, "I 've been thinkin'."

"Have ye now? What 's the use o' thinkin'? I does a lot o' it, but it doesna help me. Man, but ye 're wet, and I 'm no' much better maself. What a water!" and he slapped his cap with much energy against the wooden wall.

"Take off yer coat, and let me give it a shake," he commanded, looking with kindly solicitude upon the old man, who sat, and dripped, and shivered, the very picture of helpless though unconscious discomfort.

Tam meekly divested himself of the garment. When it had been restored to him, he repeated with quavering earnestness: "I 've been thinkin'."

"Weel, go on."

"Ye ought to give her up."

Toddie jumped. "Give *who* up?" he demanded, fixing Tam at the same time with threatening eyes.

"Her. The woman ye told me aboot. Her that 's botherin' ye."

Toddie stared abruptly outwards at the falling rain; something in his wet and serious countenance caused Tam to hold his breath.

"Why d' ye say that?" said Toddie at length, speaking thickly.

"For yer ain sake," cried Tam with eagerness. "I see you 're no' happy. You 're no' like the same man, I canna even smell the drink on ye."

Toddie sighed again.

"Ah, never tell me," burst out Tam, confirmed in his gloomy prognostications. "You 're no' happy, I see it fine. D' ye think I 'm no' carin'? Weel, ye 're wrong. Me and you has carried thegither for years, and never an ill word. Is that naethin'? I couldna say as much of ony ither man, so that 's tellin' ye!"

He broke off with a rare gesture and blew his nose with tremulous energy upon a ragged wisp of handkerchief.

"And what for should I give her up?" demanded Toddie with measured hostility.

"She 's no' worthy o' ye.— Hoots, ye wouldna hit me? I 'm no' afeared o' ye, Toddie. I ken ye better than ye ken yerself."

So confident and affectionate was Tam's smile that Toddie, disarmed, could only glare at him with undiminished antagonism.

"See here, Mister Tammas Macintyre," he remarked with awful politeness, "if onybody else had said that I 'd have knocked it doon their throat, so I would. Worthy o' me! *Her* no' worthy of *me!* I wonder ye dinna fall doon dead on the spot."

But Tam with gentle incredulity shook his head.

"I ken what I 'm sayin'," he insisted. "I 've been married maself. I ken what women are — good ones, I mean. Ma Jean was one. Nae doot she 's singin' wi' the angels at this verra moment, she had a bonnie ear for a tune. I mind once — Hoots, man, dinna fluster me, I 'm comin' to it. Weel, it 's this — if you was McPhee, or Herd, or Murdoch, if you was just takin' yer fun wi' her, I wouldna feel anxious. But you 're no' that sort. You 're like me, and — and I honor ye for it!"

Toddie eyed him in amazement.

"It 's honest marriage you 're thinkin' of," pronounced Tam with conviction.

Toddie's amazement redoubled.

"Aye," went on the old man smilingly. "Ye see, I can read ye better nor a book. Weel, I believe it would suit ye. I dinna hold wi' a man livin' alone. But ye 'll have to be careful, for now 's the time. Oh, Toddie, be canny for ony sake! Think o' yer

bairns. Is yon woman a good mither to give the puir wee things? I misdoot it sairly."

"But —" stammered Toddie, whom this prospective paternity bewildered, "But — ye dinna even ken her!"

"Na, I dinna need to ken her. I see fine what she is. Stop a minute, let me tell ye: — there 's but two sorts o' women in this world, them that makes a man happy, and them that doesna."

"Weel?"

"Weel, is she makin' you happy? Answer me that?"

Fain would Toddie have retorted with an affirmative, but truth sealed his lips.

"Ah," cried Tam triumphantly, "you 're moved. I feel for ye. It 's God's truth I 'm speakin'. If a man 's no' happy wi' a woman before marriage, never think he 'll be after."

"But — whiles it 's the man's fault."

Tam waved his hand. "Never tell me," he said indignantly. "*You!* decent spoken even in yer drink! As honest a lad as ye 'll find in St. Andrews. 'The man's fault!' Hear to him! Ah, that 's like you, Toddie, always blamin' yerself. Na, na, it 's what I said to ye before, she 's no —"

"I 'll not listen," shouted Toddie, jumping to his feet and upsetting the golf-bag, which fell with a clatter. "It 's scandalous, so it is. What do you

know? Oh, ye 've been married, I grant ye that, but is that ony excuse for takin' away a good woman's character? Think shame o' yerself! Ye 're worse nor the rain. Guid day —"

"Stop, Toddie, stop! I didna mean —"

"Weel, ye should ha' meant. An auld man like you, wi' one foot in the grave and the ither on the links. What a senseless poseetion. I 'm surprised at ye."

Tam quailed before his frown.

"An' mair nor that," denounced Toddie, warming; "yours is the man's point o' view — selfish. We men has a lot to answer for; have we —"

He was interrupted by a prolonged and painful fit of coughing. So feeble and suffering did the old man appear that Toddie's anger fled. With rough kindness and according to custom, he thumped his adversary on the back.

"Thank ye — thank ye," gasped Tam, to whom the cure was more to be dreaded than the complaint, but who would not for the world have risked hurting his friend's feelings by the confession. "That 'ull do, Toddie, I 'm better now. But ye 're no' fair to me."

Toddie muttered grimly that he was glad to hear it.

"Aye," wheezed Tam, still out of breath, "it wasna the man's point o' view only, for I had a talk aboot ye wi' a woman the ither night."

Toddie's face crimsoned.

"Hoots! Ye needna mind. I 've kenned the lassie all her life. She 's a steady, God-fearin' young woman, so she is. I 'd take her opeenion against onybody's."

"What 's her name?" questioned Toddie, partially mollified.

"Devina Greig.

"Aye," continued Tam, unheeding. "I telt her all aboot ye, how ye were washin' yerself and Bob, and how ye emptied all that good whusky into the grate."

There ensued a long silence; then Toddie's voice, hopelessly beyond control, was heard to whisper:

"What did she say?"

"Say!" Tam laughed in appreciative reminiscence. "Ye ken what women are — she couldna find enough to say. She said it was noble of ye."

"She — said — that!"

"Aye, did she. She was fair ashamed o' the ither woman. Man, I tell ye she was cryin' oot o' peety and admiration for ye. 'Tam,' says she, 'I wonder if he can forgive her?' Ah, Toddie, her heart 's in the right place. Man, if ye could only ha' cared for *her*. Weel — what are ye smilin' at?"

CHAPTER XXIX

"ACH-H, nae mair manners nor a cat! Ye wouldna catch me yawnin' in *your* face if you was talkin' aboot her. Man, I could listen by the hour, so I could. Ye 've no taste, Bob. If it was a question o' sheep ye 'd be fair aff yer head, an' is she no' worth a whole flock? Ach-h, silly beast!"

Nothing abashed, Bob watched his master as that individual proceeded to dress. A restrained excitement was observable in the dog's behavior, for was it not the Sabbath, a day to which he had looked forward with an eagerness of anticipation not to be surpassed in the heart of the most zealous church-goer. Contrary to his custom on other and less joyous uprisings, he betrayed an affectionate and personal interest in the drawing on of socks, in the fastening of buttons, for did not each step bring him nearer the breakfast — the walk — in a word, the whole vista of innocent pleasures to be enjoyed in the exclusive and day-long society of Toddie?

Despite the grayness of the morning, the sun was shining brightly for both master and dog — no mere celestial luminary, but an orb independent of solar

systems, the sun of happiness. Never in Bob's recollection had Toddie been gayer, no, not even when under the exhilarating influence of liquor. He smiled — he joked — he even essayed to sing! His manipulation of the loaf at breakfast betrayed a soul superior to economy. His treatment of the fire would have merited the warm approval of Turpie the coal merchant. The day had a most promising beginning.

After breakfast, however, there came a change. Toddie sank unaccountably into a brown study. In vain Bob threw out hints. In vain the grandfather's clock sought to remind its owner solemnly that the hour for exercise had arrived. Pipe in mouth the little caddie frowned at the fire.

"How can I manage it?" he exclaimed at length, spitting thoughtfully into the grate. "Keep still, Bob, what are ye bother'n' aboot? Ye see, it 's like this — I darena go to her house withoot being invited. It wouldna do. I 'm afeared it wouldna be company manners. She wouldna like it. I confess to ye, I 'm nervous. I wish it was over. I feel near backin' oot o' it. It 's the first glint o' her eyes I 'm fearin'. Ye ken the way she looks at ye, Bob, like as if ye 'd been stealin' the milk. And yet — did she no' tell Tam I was to forgive her? Ma God, *me* forgive *her! Me* — no' fit to breathe the same air! What a woman! What a woman!"

His face glowed with enthusiasm. Bob, divided

between sympathy and impatience, growling tenderly laid a tentative paw upon his knee.

"Aye," continued Toddie softly, as much to himself as to the dog, "I 've no need to fear. She must be awful fond o' me, or she wouldna have said that. And then — cryin'! Oh, it 's amazin'! I can hardly believe it. It 's too good to be true; so it is. But how to get at her? What would ye advise, eh?"

Bob, finding himself pointedly appealed to, looked at the door.

"That 's it!" cried his master in a burst of relief and admiration. "Ye 're a wonder! Ye just think for the pair o' us. I believe ye 're as keen on it as I am maself. By gosh, I 'll take yer advice! I 'll go to her this verra minute."

He leapt to his feet. At that moment the profound quiet of the Sabbath morning was broken by the tolling of church bells. Toddie listened as the chimes rang out, died away, and rang out once more, his face fixed, his mind working.

"I have it," he cried, slapping his leg. "I 'll go to the Kirk; she 's bound to be there."

With feverish haste he donned his best coat, the Major's boots, an india-rubber collar, a black tie, worn but once before and at a funeral, and a hard black hat, a relic of his youth — then inspected himself anxiously in the small, cracked mirror.

"This will never do!" he ejaculated, addressing

his likeness with sudden consternation. "Ye 're just a porkipine wi' that chin o' yours. I doubt she 'll never stand that! — Hair 's an awful responsibility," he confided to Bob as he whetted a razor used indiscriminately to open tins and cut its owner's face — "it 's aye scheemin' to get the better o' ye, so it is."

The operation was painfully and only partially successful, but the knowledge that it was suffering for Devina's sake was as balm to the smarting face; and it was with a more hopeful heart that, flinging the instrument of torture aside, he made precipitately for the door. But he had counted without his four-footed companion, for Bob, fully convinced that the hour for emancipation had arrived, gave vent to loud barks of delight. Toddie stopped short — his face fell.

"Bob, ma mannie," he faltered, holding out a hand, "I see what ye 're after. Ma word, I 'm no better nor a beast! I was thinkin' o' ma ain pleesure. Na, go back, puir wee man. I canna take ye, Bob. Will ye forgive me, eh?"

With that touching and divine quality so akin to the angelic and so far transcending the human — Bob gave his master absolution for all offenses, past, present, and to come. But the memory of the mournful eyes and the drooping tail followed Toddie like a mute reproach out of the little kitchen into the gray of the sunless streets.

CHAPTER XXX

THE thoroughfares which but five minutes before had been as lifeless and depressing as a tomb, began to show faint signs of returning animation. Nothing very lively or exhilarating, it is true; a mere dribble of sable-clad figures all proceeding in one direction, all visibly suffering from the effects of the Scottish Sabbath. The clatter of feet upon the cobble-stones alone dared to desecrate the silence, for voices were tuned to a hushed and sacrificial key. Even the children, under the stern eyes of their elders, marched as to a funeral, consoled in the hour of unnatural repression by the proud consciousness of gloves and the friction of unfamiliar stockings.

To the heart of a stranger this scene, so gloomy, so lacking in all the glad and spontaneous qualities that make for true worship, would have struck a chill; but to the born Scot it brought only a satisfactory sense of appropriateness. The shuttered shops, the gray streets, the colorless sky, the dark clothing and solemn countenances, all were of a piece, all harmonized equally with each other and with the slow, monotonous and melancholy tolling of the bells.

Toddie stumped along the pavement. Though in the procession, he had the embarrassing sensation of not being of it. He felt constrained and awkward in his unusual finery. He missed the freedom of the links, even the feel of the golf-bag on his shoulder. Above all, he missed Bob.

For more years than he cared to remember Toddie had avoided the Kirk, influenced by no feelings of impiety, but swayed by the Nature-spirit that worships not in houses but in the vast temple of the open air.

Did one of his colleagues take him to task, Toddie would growl: "Mind yer ain business. I'm no heathen. The Lorrd kens me fine."

With the Reverend Mr. McColl Toddie flattered himself that he was on terms of mutual approbation. Truth to tell, the "Meenister" was, with the solitary exception of the Major, the one soul in St. Andrews of whom Toddie stood in wholesome awe. For this no sense of social inferiority must be held responsible, but a lively, if fearful, appreciation of the clergyman's innate and unaffected piety. Yet, outwardly, there appeared nothing to inspire alarm in the tall, emaciated figure with its slight stoop, or in the pale face with its ascetic mouth and beautiful smile. A feeling of moral delinquency afflicted Toddie during their rare interviews, aggravated by an extreme reluctance to disappoint the one being who still enter-

tained unaccountable hopes concerning his salvation.

"I did n't see you in church last Sunday, Toddie," the clergyman had said, stopping our hero in the street upon one occasion, and speaking as if the omission were a cause of heartfelt regret to both.

"No, sir."

"I always look for you."

"Do ye, sir?"

"Always. I 'll see you there one of these days."

Much embarrassed, Toddie fumbled with his cap which he had forgotten to replace.

"How 's my friend Bob?"

"Fine, Meenister, fine." This with instantaneous relief and the broadest of smiles.

"That 's right. Tell him that he must spare you to me occasionally. Good-by, Toddie."

"Good-by to you, sir." Then, apostrophizing the departing figure: "Dang it, you 're a guid man! If all the worrld was like you it would be a bonnie place. You 're right. I 'll have to come and hear ye one o' these days. I 'll tell Bob. But the beastie 's awful exactin'; I doot if he 'll let me."

It was indeed no slight upheaval of ancient habit that induced Toddie to set Bob at defiance, to forego the Sabbath outing, to brave the criticism of the neighbors and to darken the doors of a church. Yet his imperative longing to see Devina at once, pre-

vailed over all. The impulse was irresistible. Toddie marveled. His mind was divided between wonder, timidity, self-consciousness, and a fearful joy. As he walked, he looked stolidly ahead, feigning an assurance he was far from feeling. To see his weather-beaten face composed into an awful and Seventh Day gloom, his coat buttoned tightly across his chest, as though fearful of betraying the poverty that lurked beneath, his hat jammed sternly upon his head, you would have sworn that this was for him no violation of custom, but a regular weekly occurrence. It was a most creditable imitation; but, alas, it deceived no one.

"Where is he goin'?" whispered Mrs. Aytoun, the fishmonger's wife, to her husband. "Guid sakes! dinna tell me he 's comin' to the Kirk!"

Aytoun, forgetful for the moment of the dignity befitting a silk hat, uttered an equally astonished ejaculation.

"I believe ye, mither! What 's come to him? By gosh, he must ha' found releegion!"

Mrs. Aytoun sniffed skeptically.

"Them that doesna like women will never see the Kingdom o' God. What like was you before I married ye, eh? No more use than a rotten fish. Mary, keep yer eyes straight — that 's no way to behave on the Sabbath!"

Within the porch of the sacred edifice stood Mc-

Phee, mounting guard over the plate into which the faithful deposited their offerings. Dressed entirely in rusty black, with his long upper lip recently shaved, and an expression of sanctimonious melancholy, he might have posed as a mute at a funeral.

When he caught sight of Toddie, a look of mingled amazement and curiosity overspread his face, but was banished on the instant as unbefitting the dignity of an elder. Toddie met his lack-luster eyes, in which there now shone not the faintest gleam of recognition, with a defiant jerk of the head. He would hear about it in the golf-shelter next day but no need to anticipate trouble.

"Take this," he said loftily.

And with the air of one who giveth of his abundance he produced a penny.

At the inner door, however, he paused irresolute; then, observing an empty pew conveniently near to the exit, he quietly took a seat.

The place, and more especially the mental atmosphere which it conjured up, and which was, as it were, the imperishable soul of the building, impressed Toddie profoundly. It came upon him unexpectedly, awakening emotions that had slumbered for years. Yet the interior owed nothing to adornment. Its whitewashed walls, its unpainted windows, its unlovely ceiling, its plain, box-shaped pulpit and pews, its air of simplicity, almost of austerity, drew their

power from some indwelling force that, scorning all lust of the senses, had its roots deep within the soul. Freed from the thrall of external imagery, the imagination had scope to conceive, and painted upon this somber background, as upon a canvas, the terrors of hell and the glories of paradise. It swept Toddie back irresistibly to the days of his boyhood, when he too — not the least ardent among the many worshipers, had exulted, and loved, and feared. Inexpressibly softened and subdued he gazed around him with reverence.

Devina was nowhere to be seen. In vain Toddie's eyes roamed over the occupants of the adjacent seats, searched the aisles, penetrated to the pews beneath the gallery. Every one else became to him unimportant. It was the sight of the one face that he hungered for, and yet feared. But it was not there, and as he was reluctantly forced to this conclusion, the feeling of reverence abated, and his mind was racked with anxiety.

The minister ascended the pulpit, gave out the first psalm, and the congregation stood up to sing. Toddie mechanically followed their example. His neighbor — a young woman — observing that he lacked a hymn book, invited him with a gesture to share hers. He laid hold of the extreme edge of it, absent mindedly, his eyes on the alert, his ears listening for the sound of a step.

At the beginning of the second verse a tall, dark figure, entering hurriedly, glided up the aisle and seated itself within a few yards of his pew. Toddie's heart leapt. It was she.

From that moment he sat or stood entirely oblivious of the service. Would she look at him? Nothing else mattered.

Devina was dressed in her Sunday best. Her hat boasted of a feather. Beneath its brim her luxuriant hair could be seen coiled into a dark yet shining mass. Her black jacket, setting off the full curves of her figure, was trimmed with fur of so delusive a hue that the rabbits would have been at a loss to recognize their stolen property. Her hands were concealed from sight by thread gloves at one and sixpence a pair.

This elegance of attire, enhancing as it did the somber beauty of her face, caused Toddie's heart to expand with feelings of admiration so intense as to verge upon awe. That he should dare to love so superior a being filled him with a modest amazement. He all but grew indignant with himself for his presumption. His own clothing, which up to that moment had appeared not unworthy of respect, now filled him with nothing but dissatisfaction. Why had he not black trousers, like McPhee — a silk hat, like Aytoun? He became not only anxious but depressed, for Devina seemed to have been metamorphosed into

a lady, and to have been lifted as far above his level by material circumstances, as he knew her to be by beauty of character. Even the confidences of Tam, which had hitherto buoyed him up, now ceased to inspire him with assurance. They seemed impossible. From where he stood he could see her profile. For him it lit up the church. All his life his feelings had lain dormant. They awoke now. His blood sang. His heart palpitated. Drops of perspiration gathered on his forehead. With open mouth he gazed, and gazed, and gazed again.

"Sit down, sit down," whispered his neighbor, and Toddie suddenly aroused from his dream, awoke to the fact that the congregation were at prayer.

Meanwhile Devina was blissfully unconscious of the vicinity of her lover. Taught from her youth up to look seriously impressed in church, she preserved a composed and devout demeanor; and if her eyes indulged, as at times they did, in a stealthy and critical inspection of the hats in front of her, she made haste to recall them to their duty. Indeed, deeply religious as she was by nature, the service was to her a sincere and abiding pleasure. Whether singing the psalms in her deep, untrained, yet pleasantly tuneful voice, or following the long-winded prayers with closed eyes and bowed head, or listening reverently to the reading of the Scriptures, Devina threw her whole heart into her devotions.

It was not until the text for the sermon had been given out, and Mr. McColl had begun to expound justification by faith, that, leaning back in her seat, she permitted herself to take note of the congregation. At first a bonnet on her immediate left monopolized her attention; then nearer and nearer to the pew in which Toddie was seated crept the calm and observant gaze. Toddie rigid, spell-bound, ceased to breathe. It seemed a century — then, all at once, their eyes encountered. It was but for the fraction of a second, but his fascinated face had done its work. Hot waves of color inundated Devina's cheeks, her brow, even her neck; and under the modest jacket her bosom rose and fell.

"She 's seen me!" thought Toddie, trembling. "Ma God, she 's seen me!"

Thereafter, though never another look was bestowed upon him, he sat in a trance, the victim of unreasoning delight. Her agitation had not escaped him. It restored hope and courage. The atmosphere, redolent of peppermints and musty with the smell of rarely-used clothing, seemed to him beautiful — the naked church, a shrine — the monotonous voice of the preacher, music falling from the spheres.

The service over, he waited for her in the street. At her approach he found no word to say.

"Weel," she said, and stopped before him.

"Weel, Miss Greig," he muttered huskily.

The pleading in his eyes moved her, but disguising her emotion, she remarked that it was a fine day. He assented. Passers-by saw them and smiled, but they were unconcious of the presence of others.

"Can I — can I speak to ye?" stammered Toddie.

Devina frowned. "I 've no time the now." She hesitated as she saw his face fall, then, with a rising color: "But — if ye like — I 'll meet ye this afternoon."

"Thank ye." His throat was dry; the words would scarcely come.

"On the East sands at two o'clock."

"Thank ye."

With a curt nod she turned away.

"Stop," cried Toddie. Somewhat surprised, she obeyed.

"Can I bring Bob?"

A rare smile parted her lips.

"Bring him, and welcome," she said.

CHAPTER XXXI

TODDIE was the first to arrive at the trysting place. Nor is this to be wondered at, seeing that he was a full half hour in advance of the appointed time.

As all who have visited St. Andrews know well, the East sands are the small strip of shingles that sweeps from the primitive harbor to the cliffs that extend in a series of misty headlands towards the south. Separated from the world of golf by the length and breath of the town, the East sands are, so to speak, a place apart. They seem to have forsworn all connection with sports and pastimes, with bathing machines and pierrots, with nursery-maids and children, and to have retired from humanity in a fit of penitential loneliness. For them the cries of golfers wafted over the sand-dunes are replaced by natural and more harmonious sounds — the thunder of unwearying surf, and the infinitely melancholy piping of sea-birds. Rarely do passers-by disturb their serenity. At times some solitary figure may be seen, slow-moving, often-pausing, as it laboriously gathers

driftwood to feed a cottage fire; or from the shelter of the little harbor a fishing boat may be distinguished, passing seawards.

That is all. Yet are they not without beauty — a beauty rare and all their own. Nature has not adorned them with shells, but she has painted them with the richest and freshest colors from her palette. The shingles, of somewhat coarse grain, gleams wetly in the sun, like ruddy gold. The rocks and boulders that form the southern boundary are a stone-house of ever-living wonder and delight — pools, forgotten of the tide, limpid and crystal-clear — seaweed, thick and brown as a mermaid's tresses — delicate growths, green as emerald — and salt faint flowers that seem to have drunk sorrow from the tears of the sea. Among and over these the tides love to play, with the lapse and gush of waves, with sudden sallies and swift retreats. And as though imbued with a spirit of coquetry, essentially feminine, this spot so secluded steals the elemental loveliness of every changeful hour, — decks itself in gleams and shadows, in the amber and amethyst of dawn, in the gold of noon, in the pearls and moonstones of night.

Toddie stood motionless and watched the sea. Bob, who up to that moment had been taxing his four indefatigable legs to their utmost, challenging the waves and hurling defiance at the sea-gulls, now stood beside his master gazing inquiringly up into his face

and wagging an encouraging tail. But Toddie was unconscious of these advances.

A storm had raged far out at sea. The swell of its subsiding was to be marked in the unusual size of the waves. These ocean-born creatures, instinct with life and strength, and a savage Titanic glee, came shouting towards him, rank behind rank, in long level lines; and, as each curved to the crash of its dissolution, its snowy crest, catching the sunlight, glittered like a cascade of diamonds. Something of their wild poetry passed into Toddie's blood and thrilled him strangely, he knew not why. Yet the reason was not far to seek. The great heart of ocean beat as tumultuously as did his own — the glad pæan of its praise found an echo within his soul. She was coming.

The half hour had barely elapsed when Devina was to be seen walking along the path that led from the high road. She approached quickly, as one sure of being expected. At the sight, Bob growled softly.

"Be quiet, ye beast," said his master in a rough tone, which, however, deceived no one. Then with a break in his voice. "Oh, Bob, Bob, she 's here! Whatever can I say?"

Aware that she was being watched, Devina's pace relaxed. She neared him with slow sedateness, a black figure with downcast eyes, picking her way with exaggerated care among the débris that littered

the beach. "I mustna show the man I 'm carin'," she kept repeating to herself, and schooled her features to an expression of grim immobility. But for all that, her heart beat fast, and the surf, the shingle and the cliffs swam in a radiance that emanated as much from her own thoughts as from the brightness of the sky.

Ever since she had recognized Toddie in the Kirk she had been the slave of emotions that filled her with exquisite joy and with tremulous fear. The world had changed. She moved through it in a beautiful dream. Familiar objects had become strangely unfamiliar. Vaguely she marveled thereat, but forgot them, as indeed she forgot all else, in listening to the singing of her heart. At times, rousing herself with an affort, she sternly stigmatized her frame of mind as "daft-like." It was but a momentary return to her old self, for even as she spoke she was again floating in regions of the vague and bright.

Her companions at the midday meal commented on the change; struck by the unusual softness of her voice and by the subdued and twilight brightness of her eyes.

"What 's come to the woman," ejaculated the cook, pausing in the act of washing up the plates. "She didna scold ye for upsettin' yer gravy — though it 's me that should mind, for it 's me that washes the cloth."

"Aye," returned Jessie, looking up from the critical inspection of a fashion plate, "and did ye hear her speak to the cat? She never missed the bit o' meat. I was feared she would see me laughin'. Aye, cook, take ma word for it, it 's eether stomach-ache or love. They both grips a lassie the same way. She 's for oot again this afternoon, and that 's her new hat she 's on. Whisht — here she is!"

Toddie had thus achieved a triumph of which he was unaware. To absorb a woman's mind — is not that an immense conquest for a man who aspires to be loved? For in love, as in life, nothing stands still. It is either a diminution or a progression. Once within the magic circle — having once succeeded in enthralling her imagination, in coloring her dreams, a man may march straight to a woman's heart. Everything conspires to assist him. Her every thought has become his unconscious ally, and in whispering of him continually fans the flame that devours her peace of mind. Until the end — and God alone knows whether it be for better or for worse — there can be no drawing back.

CHAPTER XXXII

"WHAT have ye to say?" questioned Devina. Her agitation, and the effort necessary to conceal it, imparted unintentional severity to her tone. This was precisely the interrogation which Toddie had foreseen and feared.

The light in Devina's eyes might have given him some insight as to the true state of her mind — but Toddie was unversed in woman's eyes. He heard only the hard voice; he felt only the overmastering presence, and pathetically conscious of his unworthiness, he trembled.

Something in the wordless appeal of his face prompted her to come to his aid.

"I didna think to be talkin' to the likes of you again."

"No, Devina." The Christian name slipped from him unawares. Neither noticed the familiarity.

"No," she said decidedly, poking at the sand with her umbrella, "not after what I saw in yer room. But — but we all has our faults, and it says much for us if we can get the better of them." She paused,

then with increased awkwardness: "I spoke to yer friend Tammas Macintyre the ither night."

"Then — it *was* true?" blurted Toddie, his face aglow.

"What was true?"

Toddie, overcome with modest embarrassment, smiled deprecatingly.

"Weel?" she insisted.

"Oh, I ken fine it doesna suit me at all. There 's naethin' noble aboot me, I 'm just a common caddie. So you can pictur' ma feelin's when you said it."

"Noble?"

"Aye, that was the word. Have ye forgotten it? Aweel —" He gazed up at her with respectful admiration —"a woman like you canna be expected to remember all the kind things she says."

"I never said it."

"Never said it!"

"No."

"Then — then it was all lies he was tellin' me. It wasna true you was cryin', eh?"

Her face flushed — she looked away.

"Wait till I catch him!"

"Na, let him be. He 'd no business to say that, but maybe he meant well. An auld man like him canna be expected to account for the silly things he says."

His anger was extinguished suddenly, like the

flame of a lamp blown out by the wind. To it succeeded depression and the natural irritation of one who, face to face with a longed-for opportunity, finds himself incapable of taking advantage of it. His castle of hope had then been built on the sands? Did she love him? Did she even care for him a little? He looked despairingly at her, and doubted.

"Your friend was no' sae wrong after all."

Devina spoke with feigned composure. In her heart she longed to make amends, for her conscience pricked her. Toddie listened breathlessly. Avoiding his eyes, she continued:

"I won't deny that I thought it — weel, not noble, but decent of ye — though, mind ye, I never said it."

Gladness and relief positively radiated from every inch of Toddie's person.

"If it 's been me that 's caused you to give up the drink, and — and to clean yerself, I 'm glad — though —" catching sight of his expression she made haste to qualify her approval by adding —"I think you might have shaved the day."

"But I have! See here! Can ye not see?"

She inspected him closer.

"Aye, now ye hold yer face like that I can see ye 've been at it. But, ma word. Ye 've made a poor job of it. The one side 's no' that bad, but the ither 's like an auld scrubbin' brush! I 'm glad I 'm not a man. It 's a mercy naebody kisses ye."

She broke off in consternation. Her color again flamed high. Then, distressfully conscious of blushing, and embarrassed by his silent inspection, womanlike she vented her feelings upon him.

"What are ye starin' at?"

"At you. You 're in the right. I 'm no' verra weel acquaint wi' kisses. Nae doot if I 'd onybody to kiss me I 'd shave closer. But I 'm glad you care. Ye see, I 've never had naebody all ma life to care how I look. Bob 's awful unobservant. When ye live wi' a body like that it makes ye indifferent."

"I wonder you 're not particular for yer ain sake — out of self-respect. D' ye never look in the glass?"

"No' verra often. When a body 's bristly it 's kind of discouragin'."

"I 'm amazed to hear ye."

"Aye, I daresay. Now you"— he gazed at her with admiration —"nae doot you 're always lookin' in the glass."

"Why d' ye say that?" She frowned at him suspiciously.

"You 're that bonnie."

The compliment slipped out almost unawares. So simply and from his heart did it spring, that Toddie seemed to be thinking aloud, rather than uttering premeditated words. But no sooner had he spoken, than, recognizing the significance of his remarks, he

stopped himself abruptly, a look of consternation in his eyes.

Was that a compliment? He feared it. That he should think it, was inevitable, but that he should be brazen enough to utter it, was inexcusable. It was an unheard-of liberty. She would be indignant. He was in for it now. With his eyes fixed on her, he waited anxiously.

But Devina had quickly averted her face. Was she afraid to let him see how deeply the simple little speech had touched her — how eagerly welcome to ears unaccustomed to compliments was this spontaneous proof of his admiration? Perhaps.

The low winter's sun had sunk behind the sand-hills, so that the shingle whereon they stood had already withdrawn into shadow. The golden rays, however, passing directly over their heads, fell full upon the lines of advancing breakers, lending an indescribable glory to the crests that leapt at the light. Far out on the billowy blue, sea-birds hovered, fishing. The pure expanse of heaven was flecked only by one cloud, so diaphanous in texture, and delicate in hue, as to appear fashioned from dreams in the heart of a rose. No signs of human life were to be seen. They were alone on that desolate golden beach.

The magic of the hour whispered to them of love — suggested tender analogies between the day that

died in beauty before their eyes, and the day that dawned in rapture within their hearts. Nature called to them, as she calls to us all when love beckons, but neither could respond. The time was not yet. Would it ever come? Neither knew. Yet there was a tension in the air, a thrill of suspense, a tremble of anticipation, a sickness of incertitude. One of those wonderful moments — encountered how rarely! — when life seems to stand breathless, conscious of its heart-beats, before some unimagined opportunity, pregnant with fate, dimly recognized, yet vital, solemn, all-important. Both felt it. Each in his or her own way. Yet each with poignancy, almost with suffering. For great emotions cannot be born without stress of soul. At the birth of love, as of a child, there is pain.

CHAPTER XXXIII

MOVED by a mutual impulse they slowly quitted the shore, and, having gained the summit of the cliffs, seated themselves on a boulder still warm with sun.

The scene that unrolled itself before them was one of indescribable loveliness. Beneath, heaved the sea, partly in light, partly in shadow. Facing them, on the far side of the bay, the hills of Forfarshire extended along the blue horizon, alluring and beckoning like the delectable mountains of some promised land. But by far the most noteworthy feature was the town itself. The atmosphere was clear, yet for some reason the smoke from the chimneys clung to the many houses, swathing them in filmy folds, endowing them with a certain mysterious quality of unreality. Crowning the cliffs stood this phantom city, comparable only to the aerial palaces begirt with battlements, which we all have seen in the light of strange sunsets, and from which we all people with dreams till the twilight steals them from us.

"It 's better nor a pictur'," murmured Toddie,

but he instinctively turned from it to his companion's face.

"Aye," assented Devina. She spoke like one in a dream.

For awhile they conversed in low tones.

Devina had grown strangely monosyllabic, oppressed by the tumultuous and incoherent agitation of her thoughts, overcome by unfamiliar shyness, strangely troubling, yet strangely sweet. She could not trust herself to volunteer a remark, or even to look at Toddie; the one preoccupation that absorbed her every energy was to cling desperately to the shreds of self-control that she felt were slipping, slipping away from her, and, above all, to conceal her weakness from her companion.

Her propinquity moved Toddie profoundly. Her presence, intensely realized, intoxicated his brain like strong wine. Not only her mysterious soul endeared itself inexpressibly to him, but her person also, and even her dress. Everything about her became the recipient of a reverence too deep for words. And as material surroundings at rare moments become a part of all that one feels, so that the scent of a flower or the strain of a song has the witchcraft irresistibly to recall the past, so in Toddie's mind the deep note of the sea, the brine upon his lips, the sunlight gilding the waves, all became one in beauty and

treasured remembrance with the face of the woman by his side. They were but platitudes he uttered — but do not the most trivial sentences oftentimes conceal the deepest feelings?

"It 's queer how things turn oot," Toddie hazarded at length.

"Aye," assented Devina again.

"That day — in yer kitchen — d' ye mind it? "

"When? "

"The time I was wet and ye gave me tea."

"Aye."

"Weel, if onybody had told me then that you and me would be sittin' here like — like this, I wouldna have believed them; would you? "

"No."

Another silence.

"It 's not bein' here only — onybody could be that — but it 's — it 's what I 'm feelin'."

He paused, but she made no comment.

"Aye," he nodded, then looked at her nervously, suddenly conscious of a hammering in his breast, overpowered by emotions that urged him to speak yet which stifled him before he could give them utterance, with no thought, no wish, no desire, but to give birth to the oppression that labored in travail within his heart.

Bob, peculiarly sensitive to the inflections of his master's voice, looked up in Toddie's face, then crept

close to the beloved presence. The action was eloquent of sympathy. It said: "I am here."

"It 's what I 'm feelin'," repeated Toddie laboriously, intent only on Devina. "Aye, it 's what I 'm feelin'."

He broke off, for his throat was dry, and the words refused to come.

Would she help him — she who had always taken the lead, she who was so much wiser and better than he — she who always seemed to know what to do and say? But no. Devina sat motionless by his side, her eyes downcast, her breath suspended, an indescribable look on her face. Was she feeling too? Toddie scarcely dared to hope it. And yet — he had never seen her like this. He gazed at her with awe. She inspired him with emotion that unmanned him. Nervously he cleared his throat.

"I 've made an awful mistake. Aye, ever since I was a laddie. I thought women couldna be trusted. I ken better now."

He paused, passed a hand across his damp forehead, then continued:

"Never think I 'm tryin' to excuse maself. Na, it 's no' a thing ye can excuse. It 's just a sort o' insult a man has to give his life to make folk forget. The way I 've talked! Aye, mony and mony a time. I 'm just fair ashamed of it now. But ye 'll never forgive that, Devina?"

She aroused herself with an effort. Her eyes met his with one quick, searching look, then again sought the ground.

"Yes."

Toddie drew a deep breath.

"I 'm glad," he said simply. "I had to tell ye, for it 's you that I 've insulted all this while withoot knowin' it; aye, and more nor that, it 's you that 's changed me."

The gloved hands upon the parasol trembled.

Toddie continued:

"Aye, it 's been all your work. It 's come on gradual like, me bein' sort o' stony ground as the Bible says, wi' a terrible lot o' weeds, too. But you made me see what I was. Ye mind what you called me?"

"Don't!" she faltered, and there was pain in her voice.

"But I will. I canna help it. I 'm proud of it now. A disgrace. That was the word, and it suited me fine. I *was* a disgrace, and I never even suspected it. But, please God, ye 'll never need to call me that again."

His immense earnestness and the sincerity that rang in every word he uttered moved her deeply in spite of all her efforts to remain prejudiced, to be on her guard. As she listened to him, as she realized his worth, her doubts wavered and broke, her fears were

lulled to sleep, the joy that she had sought to stifle sang again in her heart. As she felt this joy, which was a regeneration or upheaval of her whole nature, Devina thrilled.

"Listen," she whispered. "You 've changed me, too."

"Me!"

"Just you."

"It 's no' possible!"

"It is. It 's true. I feel I must tell ye. Perhaps ye didna ken, but once I thought — I thought I cared for some one. Maybe it was ma fault — whisht, dinna speak — but it was a mistake, an' it made me hard. Nae doot you 've noticed it."

No words contradicted her, but his face glowed with the protest, the sympathy, and the devotion that enveloped her as with an atmosphere.

She continued:

"It made me hard and unjust. You 're not the only one that 's been to blame. I was blind. I thought all men alike — all bad, I mean. And more — when a woman's heart is sore she says things she doesna mean. I said things against you."

"Did ye?"

"Aye. Once I called ye pitch."

"Weel, I deserved it."

"Ye did n't!" She contradicted him hotly. "Ye never deserved it. It was just wickedness on ma part.

Aye, and envy. I felt often that miserable just to think what a mess I 'd made of ma life, and to see ithers gettin' all the attention, and me none. But —" her voice sank, and she looked studiously away. " But even when I spoke most again' ye, I — I aye liked ye fine."

The pure color had risen to her face, and, softened by the twilight, her profile showed dark yet distinct against the rosy sky. Toddie's eye glistened. Something tumultuous swelled in his breast. The whispered confession rang loud in his enraptured ears like a blare from silver trumpets. It set his heart ablaze. It filled his whole being with gladness, and courage, and fresh life and delicious hope. The world seemed suddenly to be re-born in beauty. All inanimate things — the sun, the sky, the very grass at his feet — rejoiced and exulted.

" And now —" She made a gesture as though dismissing the episode —" Now I have to thank ye — and I feel I canna do it. I never was good at speakin'. Oh, ye 'll never ken what this has been to me! You 're a man and canna tell what a woman feels when she kens there 's somebody that understands. It 's just everything. It wasna easy tellin' ye. I never spoke sae free before — never. I canna think how ye made me. But I 'm glad. Nae doot —" She paused, then in a forced voice continued hurriedly: " Nae doot we 'll no' meet often,

but I 'll not forget this talk and all your kindness and — and that 's all, and now I must be gettin' back."

Toddie started. A gulf of despair seemed to close over him — the sunlight to be blotted out.

Was this all? Was he to lose her now when she had seemed so near? Yes, she had risen to her feet — she was preparing to go home.

A cry of passionate entreaty burst from him.

"Devina! Stop! I canna part from ye like this!"

She did not speak, but she gazed at him steadily, controlling herself with a great effort, and Toddie will never forget the look within her eyes.

"Sit down," he said hoarsely.

Slowly, and still in silence she obeyed.

She was now sitting beside him, erect, her face averted. A look of suspense, painful in its intensity, imparted a strange, unnatural fixity to her features.

Toddie began to speak. The short and broken sentences seemed to be forced from his vitals. They trembled under the stress of violent emotion. The whole man shook with a hope unnerving as fear, and with a fear tremulous as hope.

"I 'm only a caddie. Not fit to clean yer boots. But — I think all the world of you. It 's terrible presumption, but I 'd die for ye. Any good that 's in me is you. When I see ye it 's like heaven — only

bonnier. Devina — I — I — Ma God, can ye no' see what I 'm tryin' to tell ye!"

Despite her efforts at self-command, her bosom heaved, and the parasol bent between her fingers.

Toddie leaned towards her. She felt his breath upon her ear. The world swam before her eyes.

"Devina," he cried, and his voice was scarcely recognizable, "Devina, will ye have me?"

She shrank from him as though he had struck her, then slowly facing him, came very near. He could see her trembling.

"D' ye mean it?" she whispered.

"As God sees me," he replied solemnly.

"Oh, be careful, be careful," she cried, torn between longing and re-awakened fear. "Be sure, be very sure. I was took in before. I thought ma heart was killed. I canna go through with it again. I 'd rather die. What 's a lassie's heart to some men? Just a plaything to dandle, to break, and to fling away. But you —" Her eyes searched his very soul —"I 've built high on you. You wouldna deceive me, would ye — and me trustin' ye?"

But Toddie was past words. Fiercely he gripped her arm.

"I see you would na!" she cried, and her voice broke into a laugh that was half a sob. "I see ye would na. It 's come to me after all — to me! I canna believe it. Me that thought naebody would

ever care for me! But, ye do — ye do. Bob, come here. Listen to what he says. Toddie, tell it me again."

Softly twilight descended — the hour of happy illusions, for is not illusion itself a twilight of the soul that we love to people with dreams?

Upon the summit of the cliff Devina and Toddie still sat side by side.

Nothing is more eloquent, more exquisite than the silence of those who love. Voluble with feelings too heart-oppressed for expression, it soars far above speech, for in silence alone does the soul become audible. More delicate, more intimate, more intense than language; its tender, hushed pauses comprise all words, all passion, all adoration. It is to mere sound what a tear is to laughter. The silence of lovers! — the infinite bending to listen — it is eternity holding its breath.

At length Toddie, awakening from a dream of happiness whispered:

"Devina."

His manner of enunciating her name caused her to lean towards him. Even Bob, sitting between them, wondered.

"Devina," he continued, "I 've somethin' to tell ye."

"Yes, Toddie."

"I 'm afeared ye 'll no' like it."

Devina smiled.

"It 's a fact. It 's botherin' me. It 's about the Major and Miss Charity."

He paused, then emboldened by the dusk, continued:

"I meant to work honest with ye. Sure as death I did, but somehow or ither, I changed ma mind."

"Did ye?"

"Ye ken how it was, you wantin' to save her, and me him?"

"Aye."

"Weel, what with you, and me thinkin' aboot ye all the time, I sort o' got sorry for the Major. I seemed to see he didna need to be saved. I 've done worse than that. I 've — I 've told him to ask her."

Guilty, anxious, but secretly impenitent, Toddie waited for the indignation he merited.

What was this? Devina was laughing! He scarcely recognized the sound, so unusual was it, so full of happiness.

"It that all?" she cried.

"All!"

"Aye, if I 've onything to forgive, so have you."

"How 's that?" he inquired, inexpressibly relieved.

"I 've changed too. Aye, it was your fault, for I was thinkin' about you." Her voice sank, and she laid a hand upon his arm — as he felt its light

touch, there was no man in the whole world so proud as Toddie.

"Yes," she continued softly, "thinkin' of you made me see things too. What right had I to keep her from happiness, her that young bonnie, and him carin' for her. I 'm glad now, for I ken how she 'll be feelin'. Ye see, I knew he meant to ask her — a woman kens these things fine — so as the lassie has nae mother and ought to be prepared, I just told her to take him."

THE END

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